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EUROPEAN COLONIES,

IN VARIOUS PARTS OF THE WORLD,

VIEWED IN THEIR

SOCIAL, MORAL, AND PHYSICAL CONDITION.

BY JOHN HOWISON,

OF THE HONOURABLE EAST INDIA COMPANY'S BOMBAY SERVICE;

AND AUTHOR OF

"SKETCHES OF UPPER CANADA,"

"FOREIGN SCENES AND TRAVELLING RECREATIONS," ETC.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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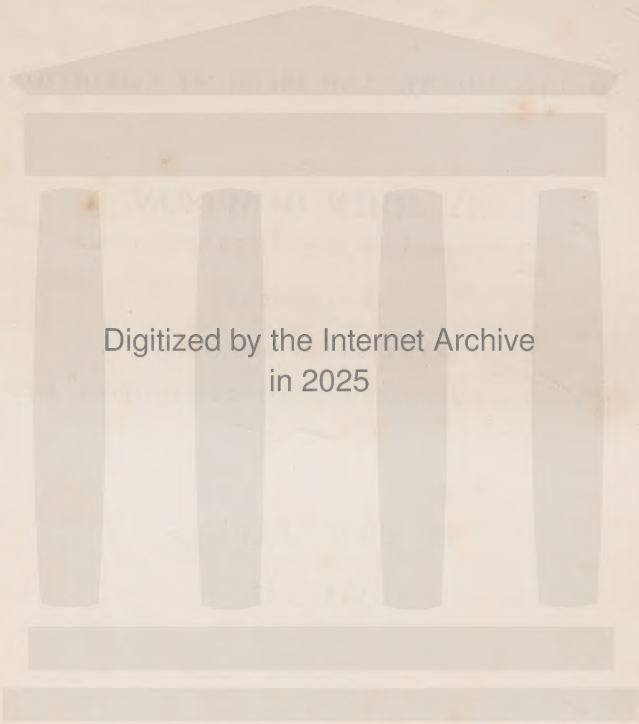

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THE COLONIES.

INDIA.

ABORIGINES OF INDIA.

In attempting to describe the aborigines of India, I feel myself in the situation of a painter who proposes to take a drawing of some vast and partly-ruined edifice. He experiences little difficulty in sketching the general outlines of the structure, and delineating its bolder features; but when he seeks to trace its minuter parts, and to give the exact proportions of the whole, he is overwhelmed by the difficulties of the task, and throws down his pencil in despair. In one place a range of pillars is overthrown; in another an archway has fallen in; here a portico is in ruins; there the sculptures are defaced by time; and scattered rubbish, weeds, and parasitical plants, throw an air of confusion over the whole edifice, and also conceal the more

delicate points of its architecture. Such is the aspect of dilapidation and decay which we observe at present in that grand social structure which was erected many thousand years ago by the founders of the empire of Hindostan, and which would doubtless have continued in repair thousands of years longer, had it not been undermined and defaced by foreign invaders. Its bolder features indeed still exist uninjured, but many of the subordinate parts are destroyed; and of some others that remain, we are unable to explain the original use, or to trace their consistency with the general plan of the composite work in which they are comprised.

While speaking of the physical character of India, I had occasion to remark, that its scenery was apt to lose its interest in the eyes of an European after it had become familiar to his view for a certain length of time, and that those features which had at first appeared alike splendid and surprising, seemed gradually to assume a languid and monotonous aspect, and eventually excited unpleasing sensations in the beholder. But with respect to human society in Hindostan, the case is precisely the reverse. The foreigner on first arriving in the country, (at least if he has not previously studied the history and institutions of its inhabitants,) will look in vain

for something in their character to awaken his interest and call forth his sympathies. Observing around him the prevalence of habits and customs which are irreconcilable with his prejudices, and the origin and appropriateness of which he neither can explain nor comprehend, he flatters his ignorance and want of perception by coming to a sweeping conclusion, that the Asiatics are a frivolous and insensate race, and that their social and political system rests upon a basis of folly. Such a mode of reasoning, repugnant as it is to common sense, finds favour with an indolent and superficial mind, and is too commonly adopted by Europeans on their arrival in Hindostan ; and if, as frequently happens, they afterwards perceive its fallacy, they nevertheless seldom feel disposed to take the trouble of studying the character and peculiarities of a people amongst whom they may have resided for a series of years without either social intercourse or community of interest. However, it is only by a knowledge of the Hindoos acquired from personal observation, or obtained from books, that a foreigner is led to feel much curiosity respecting them, peculiar as they are in their habits and ideas, and morally separated as they appear to be from every other nation upon the face of the globe.

Though the Hindoos are numerically the largest

nation in the world, it is only of late that they have become an object of interest to Europeans, or that their history, religion, and institutions, have been fully developed by the former. Nearly all the American tribes, inconsiderable and barbarous as some of them were, had been accurately described within a century after the discovery of that continent; while the Hindoos, with whom the principal nations of Europe have had more or less commercial intercourse for two thousand years past, are only now beginning to be known and justly appreciated. This retardation of the spirit of inquiry has arisen from various causes. The chief of these lay in the habitual and studied reserve of the Hindoos themselves, in reference to their own customs and usages, when questioned upon such subjects by foreigners; and in the barriers to familiar intercourse with the latter, which are imposed by their system of castes, and their ideas of purity and contamination. Nor was it till some time after the establishment of the British in India, that Europeans had begun to qualify themselves for obtaining an accurate knowledge of the Hindoos, by studying their different languages, and by seducing the Brahmans into a disclosure of the religious principles and tenets of their country. And it ought to be recollected that the false and distorted accounts of these, which were

published by the early travellers in India, were alone sufficient to create a prejudice against the Hindoos, and to repel foreigners from seeking to obtain a more intimate acquaintance with their national character and institutions. Up to the period at which Sir William Jones devoted his attention to Asiatic history and literature, we possessed nothing but a mass of fantastic and revolting fables in reference to both, from which it was impossible to deduce one rational or accurate fact or conclusion. His profound knowledge of the languages of the East was not a more important qualification than his liberality of mind and extensive general knowledge; for the two latter enabled him to speak of the Hindoos without prejudice, and to describe Asiatic manners and opinions without vilifying and depreciating them simply because they happened to be different from his own. He soon perceived that he could not make any satisfactory progress in his researches until he had become acquainted with the contents of the sacred books of the Hindoos, which form the basis of their theological and metaphysical systems, and he at length procured a copy of the Vedas, and thus rendered himself a depository of the secrets and mysteries of the Brahmans. A talented foreigner remarks that the latter, in surrendering the exclusive possession of the Vedas,

sealed their own degradation, and increased in an incalculable degree the political power of the British, by placing in their hands the key to the manners, prejudices, and religious belief of the people of Hindostan.

The Hindoos have been represented in a variety of lights by the various writers who have respectively described them. But the tone which Europeans have most generally assumed in speaking of them, is that of depreciation; and for this there are two satisfactory reasons; first, our devoted attachment to our own manners and modes of life, and the intolerance with which we are accustomed to treat all nations that stand lower in the scale of civilization than ourselves; and secondly, the difficulty which we find in entering into the spirit of the social system of the Hindoos, which, as has already been remarked, presents a repulsive aspect to foreigners, and never seems entitled to their indulgence, until they have become familiar with the people amongst whom it prevails, or have studied its general plan without reference to their own personal prejudices. To prove the truth of this, it is only necessary to examine the works of most of those authors who have described the Hindoos without having visited their country, or at least had any continued intercourse with its inhabitants. We shall generally find that their

writings, instead of offering a just picture of Hindoo manners and character, are full of the grossest misrepresentations on both points; and that the main object of the author has been to make out a case against the Hindoos, and to flatter his own prejudices and those of his readers, by vilifying the entire nation. To accomplish this, he selects fantastic stories from their mythology; describes some of their most glaring superstitions; dwells upon their ignorance of the sciences; gives a few instances of the immolation of widows, and points out the defectiveness of their moral and legislative code; and then triumphantly demands if a people amongst whom such things exist are entitled to respect or worthy of our contemplation. It is an easy part of a judge's duty to pronounce sentence of condemnation; and an author often finds it less trouble to depreciate the subject upon which he is writing, than to examine it in a philosophical manner, and to analyze and balance the good and evil which are embodied in it. Any history or description of the Hindoos, the materials of which are collected exclusively from books, must fail in conveying an accurate notion of that people; because nothing but personal observation can enable a foreigner to contemplate them impartially, and to estimate the real and practical influence of their laws and institutions.

In accusing foreigners of entertaining prejudiced notions of the Hindoo character, I ought to mention one of the most prolific sources of their misconception upon that subject. They are accustomed to believe that the Hindoo codes, both religious and legislative, are constantly in actual and literal operation; and that the frivolous and fantastic ceremonies enjoined by the former, and the revolting enactments which occur in the latter, are things of daily practice. But the mass of society in Hindostan is like that of every other country. The people composing it must labour more or less for their subsistence, and they cannot afford to devote their lives to the performance of idolatrous ceremonies, and to the study of their complicated system of religion, and consequently the influence of either is scarcely perceptible amongst them. The Hindoo mechanic, artisan, or merchant knows as little of the history of his deities as the commonalty of the Greeks and Romans knew about theirs, and he peaceably occupies himself with his business, and cultivates the pleasures suitable to his rank in society, without exhibiting that perversion of mind and monstrosity of character which are often attributed to the entire nation to which he belongs. With respect to those instances of self-immolation, drowning, infanticide, &c., which some authors represent as being of daily and habitual occurrence

in every town and village in Hindostan, it is merely necessary to remark, that the prevalence of such acts, besides being utterly inconsistent with human nature, would go far to depopulate the region in which they took place, and would set its inhabitants in arms against each other: but neither of these evils is discoverable in India, where the social system wears an aspect of mildness and harmony which is perhaps not to be found in any other country. The ceremonies and practices enjoined by the Vedas and Pooranas are as much disregarded by the generality of Hindoos, as the Jewish ritual of the Old Testament is by modern Christians; and the traveller in India, instead of daily hearing the shrieks of the burning widow, and witnessing the self-inflicted tortures of penitents, the despotism and extortions of Brahmans, and the reputed obscenities of the Linga worship, will see a mild and contented people, tranquilly employing themselves in the common business of life, and for the most part unacquainted, except by hearsay, with any of the revolting and unnatural practices to which I have alluded.

When an European has surmounted those prejudices against the Hindoos which are at first engendered in his mind, not more by the unattractive singularity of their manners and modes of thinking, than by the erroneous impressions de-

rived from the writings of many of those authors who have undertaken to describe them, he will come to the conclusion that, under certain points of view, no people upon the earth more deserve the attention of the historian and the philosopher. Their first and most striking claim to notice rests upon their vast and indisputable antiquity as a civilized nation. The Hindoos divide the period which, according to their system, has elapsed since the creation of the world, into four cycles or *yugams*, differing considerably in duration. The last of the four, which is the one now in course, is calculated by them to have had its commencement on the eighteenth of February, 3102 years before the Christian era, or 4934 years anterior to the present time; and their astronomical tables record that its beginning was marked by a conjunction of the planets. The occurrence of this at the time indicated has been proved by the calculations of modern astronomers; while other and later celestial observations made by the Hindoos have equally stood the test of examination, and been shown to be real, and not imaginary and supposed, as was at first very generally believed in Europe. These facts, illustrative of the genuine antiquity of the Hindoo nation, are strongly corroborated by their legislative and religious code called the Institutes of Menu; which Sir William Jones, judging

chiefly from the obsolete language in which it is written, pronounces to have been composed thirteen hundred years before the Christian era. This work, though abounding in fantastic opinions and prejudices, bears internal evidence that it was written for the use of a people far advanced in civilization; for it describes the duties of various officers of government, lays down rules as to taxation and commerce, and speaks of money, wheeled carriages, tolls and public roads, and defines the rights of succession and inheritance. If then the Hindoos had made such progress in the arts of social life three thousand years ago, we cannot but admit that they must have assembled themselves into a nation at least a thousand years before. They could not within a less space of time have become a polished and instructed people, and acquired the use of letters, and a familiar acquaintance with trade and manufactures, and a considerable knowledge of architecture and of several of the sciences. Indeed the progress of civilization must have been particularly slow amongst them, for they could not have derived either instruction or assistance from their neighbours, supposing they had any; for it would appear that at the earliest periods, their institutions were calculated to restrain them from quitting their country, or cultivating an intercourse with foreigners. A third

proof of the antiquity of the Hindoos may be deduced from the circumstance of their general character, manners, and institutions, being the same in the present day as they were at the time of the invasion of Alexander the Great, 2165 years ago. Those principles of national stability, which have maintained their political existence for so long a period, are equally calculated to have had that effect for many centuries previous; for a people that has preserved its religion and institutions unchanged during two thousand years, may be considered as able and likely to do the same, or to have done it, for an indefinite length of time.

But setting aside any discussion respecting the greater or less antiquity of the Hindoo people, we may feel certain that they have existed in nearly their present state for three thousand years past; and we are strongly led to inquire what have been the causes of such unparalleled national permanence and stability. How comes it that the empire of Hindostan, though assailed and ravaged by a succession of invaders and conquerors, has alone escaped that decay and ruin which have been the fate of so many other powerful nations? The kingdom of Assyria, the greatest of ancient times, was dismembered and perished after an existence of seven hundred years. Persia, renowned under Xerxes and Cambyses, had a similar history.

Egypt, preeminent in arts, in riches, and in population, fell a sacrifice in its turn. The Romans, at one time possessors of half the known world, no longer exist as a people. The eastern empire of Constantine, once so great and flourishing, expired under the dominion of the Turks; and the Caliph dynasty, founded by Mahommed, and long the terror of Asia and Europe, has latterly sunk into insignificance. In some of the above instances the entire nations referred to have become extinct, and their manners and institutions are to be traced, and that but faintly, in the pages of history alone; while in others the original race has gradually lost its identity by intermixture with foreigners, and ceased to maintain the peculiar opinions and customs which were adopted by its progenitors and founders. But the empire of Hindostan, though denuded of much of its former grandeur, and disunited in many of its parts, is still fresh and vigorous in so far as concerns the general manners and institutions of its people, on whom we can look in the present day with the firm belief that we see them the same as they were three thousand years ago.

After this, is it reasonable for any one to condemn indiscriminately the institutions of the Hindoos? Can that be bad in theory, which has worked so well in practice? Would it not have been happy for the nations of Europe, had they

learned to preserve their identity and their existence as the Hindoos have done? The empire of Hindostan forms a magnificent subject of contemplation, whether we regard its prodigious magnitude, or its vast period of uninterrupted stability, or the infinite concourse of human beings which it has moulded into a particular social form, and maintained in a state of unity for a long series of ages. What a contrasting picture does Europe present within even a few centuries! There we observe civil and religious wars and massacres — bloody persecutions for matters of opinion — Guelphs and Ghibellines destroying each other they know not why — holy crusades undertaken by tribes of banditti — irruptions of barbarians into half-civilized countries, and of civilized men into barbarous ones, in both cases with the same sanguinary results — national aggression and retaliation, and the morbid excitement of political party spirit disturbing all classes, and turning to the advantage of none. The history of Hindostan resembles the course of a mighty, placid, and unruffled stream, while that of Europe is like the agitated current of a turbid mountain rivulet.

It appears that the empire of Hindostan, at the period of its highest grandeur and prosperity, was governed by one sovereign, called Maha raja, or great king. Inferior princes ruled its different

subdivisions, and, though nominally dependent upon the Maha raja, their power was absolute within their respective kingdoms. As may be supposed, they sometimes made war upon each other; but local disturbances of this kind caused little disorder or inconvenience even in the regions where they took place; for the military belonged exclusively to a particular caste, whose sole business was war, and who made it a rule never to injure or disturb any person that was not professionally a soldier, whether he happened to be a fellow-countryman or not.

That war was an uncommon occurrence in Hindostan at that time, may be inferred from the slow progress which the natives were found to have made in the military art when Alexander invaded India. The empire under the Maha raja presented the wonderful and unexampled spectacle of one hundred and fifty millions of people professing the same religion, following the same customs, and harmoniously adopting the same political institutions; and it seems requisite here to mention shortly the principal causes which appear to have operated in producing this unanimity of opinions, and in keeping united the various parts of a social structure of such vast dimensions. The first in importance amongst these is the system of castes; the second, the aversion of the

Hindoos to foreigners, and the obstacles which their religion presents to their quitting their native country; and the third, the toleration which they have always exercised, towards sectarians of their own race, as well as to persons professing a different faith from themselves.

The institution of castes, revolting as it may at first appear to our notions of reason and equity, is doubtless the most effective engine that ever was devised for preserving the requisite union and tranquillity of civil society. Many of the disorders to which the latter is subject, arise from the irregular and arbitrary proceedings of men who, finding themselves without any assigned station in the world, are led to commit excesses, and to disturb their fellow-beings, either with a view to personal advantage, or to gratify their own restless propensities. Another class of people, not less hostile to social peace, consists of those who are discontented with their condition, and desirous of exchanging it for a different one, or who indulge ambitious views, and aspire to offices and dignities lying beyond their proper sphere of life. A third set of troublesome individuals, comprehends those persons to whom vanity and idleness, and similar causes, give a disposition to become political or religious reformers, and whose wild theories and unsettled principles, being diffused

amongst people who are incapable of forming a just estimate of either, occasion useless and irritating controversies, or acts of turbulence and insubordination.

The system of castes is not only unfavourable to the machinations of these three classes of social disturbers—it actually prevents their having existence at all. Where it prevails, every individual having an assigned station, in which he knows that he is unalterably fixed, he never allows his thoughts to wander beyond it; and his ambition, should he feel any, necessarily directs itself towards the improvement and perfectioning of the art or business which he professes; and is thus beneficial to his fellow-creatures, instead of causing them agitation and annoyance. The mechanic must not leave his trade and become a soldier; nor may the soldier throw aside his arms and embrace the life of an artisan. The merchant is interdicted from seeking any political employment; nor is it lawful for the manufacturer to promulgate any new doctrines in religion. The agriculturist never can intermeddle with the affairs of government, or aspire to power; and whoever is disposed to be a reformer, must confine his projects to the things which lie immediately and exclusively within his own department, and which he is, of course, more or less capable of compre-

hending. Nor, where the system of castes is in operation, do we perceive parents struggling to elevate their children to a station superior to that in which they were born, and, influenced by a vain emulation, denying themselves the comforts of life, in order that they may fit their sons and daughters for the higher sphere in which they wish them to move, but which, in all probability, they fail in attaining, or at least not till after they have experienced many troubles, afflictions, and disappointments, without any compensating result of happiness. On the contrary, the members of the different castes, whether young or old, naturally seek enjoyment and prosperity in the sphere to which they belong, be it humble or exalted; and are never involved in that fierce struggle for preferment, which is the animating spirit of a highly civilized state of society, and which has so much effect in rendering men artful, selfish, and ungenerous.

The only people in the world who bear any resemblance to the Hindoos in the stability of their government and institutions are the ancient Egyptians, who were divided into castes from the earliest times. Herodotus says that these were seven in number; viz. priests, soldiers, herdsmen, swineherds, tradesmen, interpreters, and pilots; but the generality of modern writers suppose that

there were in reality only four castes in ancient Egypt, which included all professions whatever, as is at present the case in India. The empire of the Pharaohs, and even the descendants of the race who composed it, have indeed been long extinct; but it must be observed that the political fabric crumbled away, not in consequence of internal weakness and disunion, but was destroyed by the ravages and innovations of foreign conquerors. At the same moment that the bull Apis fell beneath the sword of Cambyses, the keystone of the arch on which rested the foundations of the kingdom dropped from its place, and ruin and confusion speedily followed.

But of all the advantages which belong to a system of castes, the most obvious and important one is the obstacle which it presents to the occurrence of political revolutions and disturbances. The people composing each particular caste, being disunited from those of every other by the difference in their employments and prejudices, are naturally indisposed to enter into an alliance with them, and cannot count upon their co-operation in any case except when the common safety is at stake. Any caste animated by a popular movement, and inclined for insurrection, must trust entirely to its own unassisted strength; for the others, instead of joining it, will at least remain

neutral, or will more probably assume an attitude of hostility, and oppose the pretensions of the malcontents. Supposing, then, that there are four great castes, it will almost always happen that three of these will continue inactive in the event of a spirit of insubordination being manifested by any one of the number. It is upon this principle that the East India Company's native regiments are always if possible made to consist of men of different castes, whose respective prejudices prevent their forming combinations, or mutually supporting each other in acts of disobedience.

Various evils and inconveniences have been described as attending upon a system of castes, and correctly too; for were it destitute of some of these it would resemble no other human institution. All that I contend for is, that it appears upon the whole to be the best plan that ever was invented for maintaining social order and tranquillity amongst a vast body of people; and that it actually accomplishes this object becomes evident on a reference to the empires of Hindostan and ancient Egypt. The popular contests which sometimes occurred in the latter country, between the inhabitants of different villages and towns, arose from the dissimilarity of the objects which were worshipped in each. In one place the wolf was

esteemed divine, in another the cat, and in a third the crocodile or the serpent; and the devotees were occasionally led to contend about the qualities and virtues of their respective sacred animals; but these disputes had no reference whatever to the distinction of castes; and it is difficult to imagine what the ancient Egyptian priests and legislators could have had in view in instituting such diversities of religious worship, calculated as they were to form sources of perpetual dissension amongst those who separately adopted them.

One of the most plausible objections against the institution of castes is, that it is calculated to excite jealousy and hatred between the different classes of society, and is unfavourable to the exercise of charity and benevolence, by confining men's sympathies within a limited and particular sphere. Observation does not at all justify these conclusions. In India, people of different castes feel no hostility towards each other on that account, even though they may be defended from eating together, or living in the same house. Their intercourse is distinguished by mutual courtesy, however wide apart their grades in society may be; for they consider that a system of castes is a divine and unalterable institution, and that a man is placed in a higher or lower one by the decrees of Providence, which of course he can neither

evade nor oppose. On the other hand, when our charity is limited to particular objects, it becomes more efficient and imperative. In Europe, the indigent and miserable have an equal claim upon every one of their countrymen, and therefore they are in many instances neglected by all. In India, natural compassion, and a regard for the honour of the caste, form such strong inducements to charity, that the individual who solicits assistance from his class-mates scarcely ever fails to obtain it, and it is more generally bestowed without being asked at all. It is both pleasant and amusing to find the detractors of the Hindoos stating as a proof of the inhumanity of the latter, that not a public hospital, or almshouse, or charitable institution of any kind is to be met with in India. How, then, I ask, are the multitudes of poor that must exist in so vast a country provided for? They certainly neither die of want, nor *do* they infest the roads and streets like European beggars, nor are they supported by parochial contributions. The simple truth is, that the indigent are universally relieved by their respective castes, who willingly take that burden upon themselves, and consider it rather as an act of duty than of merit.

It has been farther urged, that where a system of castes is in operation, men are often forced to

engage in employments and adopt modes of life unsuitable to their genius and character. But this objection will lose all its importance, if we consider that the great mass of our species prove as fit for one occupation as for another, provided they are trained to it from early youth; and that the grand and essential business of society is of a mechanical nature, and such as requires industry rather than talent for its performance; and though the flights of genius may occasionally be checked, or altogether prevented by the restrictions of caste, still the loss (at best an equivocal one), which mankind may suffer in that way, is compensated by the obstacles which are opposed by the same causes to the effervescence and excesses of those restless and ambitious spirits who are ever ready to disturb and embroil the community in which they happen to be produced.

Had not the empire of Hindostan been from the earliest times cemented by the institution of castes, it would long since have crumbled to pieces under the shocks of foreign invaders, and the introduction of foreign manners and different religions. The Chinese, after being conquered by the Tartars, quickly amalgamated with them, and adopted many of their habits; and now the two races are hardly to be distinguished from each other. But the Hindoos, though they submitted

to the Mahomedans, and were often plundered, persecuted, and massacred by them, refused to sacrifice to their prejudices one religious ceremony, one point of doctrine, or one customary act, however insignificant; and this steadfastness has continued unabated up to the present time. The British, in endeavouring to make the Hindoos conform to their opinions, have employed the gentler means of persuasion, flattery, and motives of self-interest, but with equally little effect; and they still remain as far separated from us in sympathies, in social habits, and in modes of thinking, as they were at the period at which we first began to form establishments in their country.

The unparalleled stability of the Hindoo empire is, secondly, to be ascribed to the aversion of its people to foreigners, and to the obstacles which their religion presents to their quitting their native country. Though the Hindoos have at all times allowed strangers to visit their ports, and have maintained a commercial intercourse with them, they have never encouraged them to reside in their country, or shown any disposition to copy their manners, or to participate in their knowledge and acquirements. Indeed, all foreign trade on the part of the Hindoos is carried on by a class of men called Banyans, who act either as principals

or agents, and alone have the opportunity of associating with merchants and seamen coming from abroad; and hence a knowledge of the opinions and habits of life of the latter is confined to them, and cannot extend farther or insinuate itself into the mass of society. The sources of innovation being thus destroyed, and religion and ancient usage discountenancing everything of the kind, it is not wonderful that the Hindoos should so long have retained the same system of manners, and preserved themselves from the insidious and disturbing influence of foreign novelties. And, while their commercial system prevents the introduction of new ideas by foreigners, their religious code renders a similar thing impossible on the part of themselves; for, as no Hindoo (at least of the three higher castes,) can go out of India without infringing his rules of life, and rendering himself for ever impure, it may be supposed that few individuals of the race are disposed to venture beyond the precincts of the land of their birth. The Hindoo who crosses the Indus loses caste, even supposing that he continues to practise those minute observances in respect to diet and purification, a due attention to which is hardly possible under any circumstances in a region not peopled by men of his own persuasion. In

ancient times, the Hindoos were doubtless more strict in this particular than they are at present; and we may reasonably doubt if the Asiatic who followed Alexander the Great to Babylon, and the person of a similar description who, at a subsequent period, visited Greece, were real Brahmans. They more probably belonged to the class of wandering mendicants that still exist in India under the name of Jogies, and who acknowledge no caste, and partake of all kinds of food without distinction. Bell, in his Travels from Moscow to Peking, states that he met with an individual on the confines of Tartary, who professed to be a Brahman. He was standing on the bank of a river where several boys were angling, and as often as any of them caught a fish however small, he would purchase it with a piece of copper money, and throw it into the stream; thus evincing his belief in the doctrine of metempsychosis; but he was more likely a disciple of the Grand Lama than a Hindoo; for the latter would have been rather out of his element in such a part of the world. Thus the Hindoos, refusing to learn anything from the foreigners who may visit their territories, and prohibited by their religion from going abroad themselves, and withal naturally disinclined for innovation, have successfully resisted the ingress of those new opinions and artificial wants, whose

diffusion amongst a people has in so many instances caused the decay and downfall of great empires.

The third main cause of the stability of the Hindoo government appears to be its unlimited toleration of religious sectarianism. So long as men are permitted freely to exercise their opinions in this respect, they never entertain the idea that there is any connexion between religion and politics, nor consider that the existence of different views of the former authorises or requires that the persons indulging them should live in natural hostility; but, whenever persecution begins, or even when the government manifests a strong partiality for any particular sect, and a determination to advance its interests, the denounced or neglected party becomes a political one, and, throwing aside the weapons of theological contest, assumes those of civil warfare; because it has, or rather appears to have, no longer any community of interests with the nation to which it belongs. In a case of this kind, when the objects of persecution are able to take refuge in a foreign country, and establish themselves there—as the Puritans did when they quitted England and settled in North America—the evil is a temporary one; and society, freed from its disaffected members, soon regains its tranquillity, and has nothing far-

ther to fear from their machinations. But the victims of intolerancy in Hindostan, had such ever existed, could not have resorted to emigration for relief and liberty of conscience, because it is a measure utterly repugnant to the feelings and most sacred prejudices of a Hindoo, to whatever religious sect he may belong; and one which, according to his notions, would involve him in perdition, or entail upon him the penalty of several hundred thousand transmigrations. Had religious persecution been authorised or practised in Hindostan, it must in every instance have continued till the sect undergoing it was exterminated; nor would examples of the kind have frightened the rest of the people into conformity, or checked that fickleness of belief and opinion which is one of the characteristic failings of the nation. The Hindoos have therefore always wisely avoided domestic or foreign holy wars; and the only instance of religious persecution which is even surmised ever to have occurred amongst them, is that which the Brahmans once exercised amongst the Boodhists, and which is supposed to have led to several sanguinary battles, though the whole story rests almost entirely upon obscure tradition. But putting political considerations out of the question, the tolerance of the Hindoo is fostered by the placidity of his temper, and by

his unirritable disposition, as well as by the pliant character of his religion; all the *minor* doctrines and tenets of which admit of much latitude of interpretation, and are calculated to encourage a spirit of discursive and imperfectly-defined sectarianism amongst its professors.

Having thus sketched a few of the principal features of the constitution of the Hindoo empire, I come next to speak of the religion which has prevailed there from time immemorial. I have already remarked, that the general character of the natives of India has been represented in very opposite lights by different writers; and the same observation applies, in at least an equal degree, to their system of religion. In the opinion of one class of authors, the sacred books of the Hindoos abound with sublime ideas and grand conceptions; while others describe them as being a repository of the most monstrous and revolting fictions that ever were invented by man. But these contradictions will easily be explained, if we consider that the authors of them have respectively grounded their opinions upon an examination of a particular part of the subject, instead of taking a view of the whole. The Hindoo religion may be regarded under two distinct aspects, one of which is noble and inviting, and the other absurd and contemptible. If we confine our

attention to the leading principles which it recognizes and developes, and which doubtless at first constituted the sole tenets of its votaries, we shall find much to admire and little to condemn: but if we direct our view to the mass of mythological corruptions and extravagancies which has in the lapse of ages been superadded to the original system, our minds will recoil from the subject, and our sympathies take flight from a sphere in which they can find no resting-place.

The leading doctrine inculcated by the Hindoo religion is pure, consistent, and sublime, and is unfolded in a style of dignity and grandeur which we shall look for in vain in any other system of paganism. It inculcates a belief in one Supreme Being, self-existent, infinite, omnipresent, omnipotent, and unchangeable, and describes him as reposing in perfect tranquillity and happiness, and in a state of absolute unity; like the waters of a motionless, transparent, and fathomless ocean, interminable in extent, everlasting in duration, and unsusceptible of disturbance. This Being is too exalted in his nature to engage in the work of creation himself; and the universe was formed through the medium of an emanation of his divinity, personified under the character of Brahma, from whom were afterwards generated two attributes essential to the government of the mundane

system, viz. those of preservation and destruction, figurately expressed by the names of Vishnoo and Siva; but, in reality, having no separate existence or individuality any more than Brahma. Such is the fundamental tenet of the Hindoo religion, and such was doubtless for a long time the only one admitted by its promulgators; who, though they might entertain a variety of speculative opinions respecting the nature of the soul, and the moral relations of one species, did not inculcate a system of idolatry, or reduce the divine character to a human standard, till they perceived that the gross perceptions of the mass of society required that the Almighty should be represented in a tangible form, and that his qualities should be illustrated by characteristic images.

At what time this corruption of the religious system of the Hindoos took place is uncertain; but it must have been effected by the Brahmans, in order to pave the way to the establishment of that theocracy which has long prevailed in India. The theological creed of all the well-informed Brahmans of the present day is confined to the acknowledgement of a Supreme Being, and to a belief in the transmigration of the soul, and in a system of future rewards and punishments. At the ceremony of investing a young Brahman with the triple cord, which is usually performed when

he has attained the age of twelve years, the officiating priest, it is said, whispers to him that there is only one God, and that the popular mythology was invented for the purpose of affecting the imaginations of the vulgar, and as an instrument for maintaining them in subjection; but that he must preserve an inviolable secrecy upon these subjects except when in the society of individuals of his own caste. In the same manner, at the celebration of the mysteries of Isis, the Hierophant used to announce to the newly initiated the doctrine of the unity of the Supreme Being, and also to assure them that the various deities worshipped by the populace were only men, or incarnations of physical phenomena, intended to fix the ideas and strike the senses of the ignorant.

In directing our attention to the mass of pagan fables which has been appended to the original simple and sublime tenets of Hindooism, we cannot but feel astonished that the character of the latter should not have in some small degree infused itself into the composition of the former; but this is so far from being the case, that the convoluted pillar of Hindoo mythology presents scarcely a single feature or outline in accordance with the style of the pedestal upon which it has been erected, and is in its construction as offensive to taste, and even unassisted reason, as the other is

agreeable and conformable to both. Though the Egyptian and the Grecian mythologies embrace a multitude of fantastic and frivolous fictions, still we can generally discover some meaning in the greater number of these, whether it be a moral truth, a personification of the powers of nature, an astronomical problem, an ingenious allegory, or a far-fetched conceit. But the sacred fables of the Hindoos are for the most part so wild, incoherent, and obscure in their character, as to defy criticism and discourage conjecture; and so unnatural in conception, that they entirely fail either to please our taste or engage our sympathies. The Grecians have been accused of having invested their gods with a smaller portion of reason than belongs to the generality of men; and the Hindoos may with equal justice be said to have attributed to theirs a greater amount of folly than is common to our species. Indra, Siva, and Krishna, and the rest of the heavenly host, perform, it is true, various wonderful and prodigious deeds, but generally without any comprehensible or useful result, while the caprice of the actors is often as apparent in these scenes as their reported motives are inconsistent and reprehensible. Even Sir William Jones and Mr. Colebrooke, and other persons well qualified to appreciate the Indian mythology, and likewise disposed to place it in as

favourable a point of view as possible, have acknowledged that many of its details are beyond their comprehension, and irreconcilable with the general principles of that religion of which they form a part.

Who then were the inventors of these extravagancies? Surely not those Brahmans who founded the Hindoo dynasty, and who taught and believed that there was only one God. Surely not their successors, from whom the Greeks borrowed most of their systems of metaphysics and philosophy, and who cultivated the sciences at a time when the greater part of Europe was immersed in utter barbarism.

The purest and most attractive part of the Hindoo religious code is that which relates to penitents, and to the practice of those austerities which are calculated to procure to him who performs them direct absorption into the divinity. The rules delivered in the institutes of Menu, for the conduct of a Sanniassy, or holy recluse, are simple, sublime, and impressive, and at the same time so severe and rigid in their character, that even those of the Trappists in Europe seem mild and endurable in comparison. It must, however, be observed, that Menu does not enjoin to ascetics even of the strictest order the adoption of any of those vulgar modes of bodily torment which are

resorted to by wandering Hindoo mendicants with the view of exciting pity and extorting alms, and which most travellers in India have described as being penances which are instituted and recommended in the religious code of the country. The man who holds his arm over his head till it withers, or who allows his nails to grow through the back of his hands, is regarded by the majority of Hindoos in the same light that Diogenes was viewed by the Athenians, when he sat in a tub on the highway, or embraced a marble statue in freezing weather. The Brahman who aspires to become an orthodox Sanniassy, or a holy recluse of the most exalted grade, must abandon his wife and children, and all human society, and retire into the solitude of a dark and unfrequented forest, carrying with him only a staff, a black antelope's skin, and a vessel to hold water. He may build a hut, but he ought rather to be contented with the shelter afforded by a tree, and his food should consist entirely of the plants and roots growing around him. However, should the place not afford a sufficiency of these, he may occasionally go for a supply of grain to the nearest village, and this must be obtained in the form of alms; but should any one refuse to bestow these, he is to walk away in silence, and make application elsewhere. The only bodily torment which he is

authorized to inflict on himself, independent of those produced by hunger, cold, wind, and rain, is the penance of sitting in the midst of four fires at mid-day, under the blaze of an unclouded sun. In general he is to remain fixed in one place and posture, his mind intent upon the contemplation of the Divine Being, and indifferent to glory, earthly happiness, and the praise of men; his body emaciated by abstinence, destitute of passions, and exposed to the mercy of the elements. Living thus, he will sooner or later enjoy absorption into the deity, instead of being previously subjected to a succession of births under different forms, like the generality of mankind. A Sanniassy may be considered a personification of the real principles of the Hindoo religion. Instead of performing idle ceremonies, repeating certain forms of prayer, and visiting holy places, he tries to subdue his spirit, and to mortify his passions, and to divest himself of all sensual and human propensities; and it is worthy of remark, that the Hindoo code declares that no man can justifiably become a Sanniassy recluse, until he has performed certain social duties comprehended in the state of life called Agrastha; which implies a residence in a town or village, the pursuit of some kind of business, and the rearing of a family. An individual having thus performed his part in the world, and

provided for his children, may lawfully and conscientiously withdraw from all intercourse with his own species, and devote himself to penitence, should he feel so inclined; a restriction which it would be well to enforce in all countries where people are in the habit of adopting a monastic life from indolence or caprice, or disappointed ambition, and without having previously rendered any service either direct or indirect to their fellow-creatures.

In examining the religious code of the Hindoos, we are at first struck with the variety of frivolous, complicated, and apparently unmeaning ceremonies which it enjoins, and the strict observance of which, as the Brahmans themselves admit, would occupy the whole time of any individual who might attempt it, to the exclusion of every other employment. But if we look a little more deeply into the subject, we shall perceive that the legislator who invented these multitudinous rites, intended by them to secure permanence and stability to his system, by attaching the idea and practice of it to every action of human life. He was aware that men quickly become regardless of things which do not affect their senses; and therefore he ordained that the Hindoos should neither go to sleep, nor awake in the morning, nor cross their thresholds, nor walk abroad, nor eat or drink,

nor wash themselves, nor change their clothes, without performing some rite inseparable from each of these transactions, and calculated to remind them of their religion; and he instituted a vast number and variety of ceremonies, in order that every individual might find amongst them a few that were suited to his taste and his circumstances. Thus has the Hindoo religion been preserved in operation and activity for thousands of years. Upon the same principle the Catholic system has retained its primitive character up to the present time; and the Jews have upheld their identity as a people amidst the merciless storms of persecution to which they have constantly been subjected.

When a system of religion ceases to affect externally the manners and domestic habits of those who profess it, we may safely conclude that its proper influence is nearly unfelt, or is rapidly declining. Such seems to be the case with Christianity at present, and more particularly in Protestant countries, where, in so far as the mass of society is concerned, its doctrines are received as a matter of form, and assented to merely in compliance with the customs of the day. Religion has long since ceased to be a subject of enthusiasm in the more civilized states of Europe; and any mark or badge indicative of its influence is rejected by the

people as a symbol of ignorance and superstition. They are ashamed to allow it to interfere in the remotest degree with their habits of life; and every one furnishes himself with arguments in proof of the uselessness and nullity of external observances. It is pleasant to hear our clergymen weekly thanking God from the pulpit that we do not live in times of persecution. Nothing can be more in harmony with the spirit of the age than this. For who amongst us would willingly suffer anything for the sake of Christianity? Who would die for it? Were a crusade preached, who would join its standard without pay? Fasting has long since become unfashionable amongst clergy and laity; and when money is required for the erection of a church, no one will give it unless he be assured of receiving a fair percentage. This indifference to religion is called in modern phraseology general enlightenment, and emancipation from the prejudices and superstitions of our ancestors. But their prejudices and superstitions had a happier effect upon society than the present system of general instruction; the obvious result of which is to create discord and disunion amongst men, and to excite their selfishness and avarice, by giving them wants and desires which their condition in life will not permit them to gratify. It is very certain that the

first effect of the diffusion of knowledge and education amongst the lower classes of any country is to render them freethinkers and atheists; as is exemplified in England in the present day, where the wretched mechanic or labourer, intoxicated by the superficial notions which he has acquired at school, or from the perusal of some newspaper or pamphlet, feels a pride in exercising his unfledged reason upon the affairs of church and state, and considers himself qualified to form original opinions in reference to both. The existence of numerous ceremonials of religion has always proved a powerful bond of union amongst a people, and is more calculated than anything else to impede the progress of that mercantile and selfish spirit which corrupts every highly-civilized society, and sets its members in hostile array against each other. Nearly all the ancient legislators have imposed upon the mass of their respective nations the daily performance of a variety of rites and ceremonies, as a powerful means of diffusing and preserving a sense of religion, and of making bodies of men move, act, and think in unison. The happy influence of this principle is evinced in the history of the ancient Egyptians, the Hindoos, and the Mahomedans, all of whom have respectively been distinguished for national

conformity, and for simultaneousness of views and opinions, arising, without doubt, in a great measure, from the interweavement of a ritual system into the daily and familiar transactions of their lives. Hence all of them retain, even in the present time, an enthusiasm in the cause of their religion, and recognize in it a bond of fellowship and mutual alliance; while enlightened and instructed Europeans, having shaken off the trammels imposed by the practice of external observances, are a prey to sectarian discord, and have become too conceited to conform themselves without repugnance to the spirit of Christianity, and in many instances too sceptical to believe in its divine origin.

The adoption of a strict observance of a ritual similar to that of the Hindoos, or even of a far less complicated character, of course implies the existence of a theocracy in the country where it has taken place. Though this form of government has been much reviled as the parent of ignorance and superstition, it is well calculated to maintain large masses of people in concord and tranquillity, and to force their energies into one channel, and to produce unanimity of opinion and national enthusiasm. It is curious to remark, that all those monuments of antiquity which astonish us by their grandeur, magnitude, and durability, are the

work of nations who lived under a theocratic government.

In Egypt, the pyramids, the catacombs, the lake of Mœris, the Sphinx, and the embankments and canals of the Nile, were executed during the reign of the Pharaohs; and all works of the kind ceased on the termination of their dynasty; and though the Ptolemies raised the country to a high degree of commercial prosperity, they never succeeded in reviving that taste for the execution of grand designs which had prevailed previous to the invasion of Cambyses, when the priests ruled with absolute and unlimited sway. The city of Tadmor, or Palmyra, in the desert of Syria, whose ruins exceed in beauty and magnificence everything of a similar kind in the world, was built by a people who worshipped the sun, and who lived under a theocracy which, though of a milder kind than that of ancient Egypt, was equally influential upon the character of those who were subjected to it. The pyramids of Otumba, and the vast military monument of Xaxicalco, in Mexico, were one of the results of the theocratic system which existed there at the time of the invasion of the Spaniards; and though these structures may appear not very considerable, when compared with some of a similar kind in the old world, yet, if we reflect in how low a state the mechanic arts were

amongst the people who reared them, we shall be led to regard them as mighty and imposing efforts of human labour.

Hindostan, as may be supposed, abounds with monuments of a theocratic kind. There the splendid pagodas, palaces, caravanseras, and tanks, have invariably some sacred associations connected with their design or construction; and many of them are extraordinary evidences of the patience and inexhaustible resources of the people by whom they were erected. In Europe, we owe nearly all our architectural monuments of magnitude or beauty to the zeal and enthusiasm of the Roman Catholics. There the Protestants, living under no religious bond of union, and experiencing no popular directing influence, turn their means and energies into a variety of channels, and seldom employ them in the erection of sumptuous and durable edifices, illustrative of the opinions and spirit of their own times. Voltaire has remarked that the pyramids of Egypt must have been built by a despotic sovereign, who had thousands of slaves at his command; and that, though England is more powerful than Egypt could have been at the period in question, the king of the former would find it impossible to erect monuments of a similar magnitude. The last assertion is doubtless a correct one; but it appears to me, that the ob-

stacle which a king of England would experience in the accomplishment of such a design, would arise less from his want of absolute power, than from his want of the means of awakening popular enthusiasm, and causing unanimity of opinion amongst his subjects upon a point which did not concern their personal interests.

Those who built the pyramids were animated by the spirit of religion, and no other kind of influence would have led men either to conceive so magnificent a project, or given them patience and perseverance to execute it. The mercantile character of most of the nations of Europe is as hostile to a taste for expensive works of art, as are the circumstances of all the highly-civilized communities which belong to that quarter of the globe. The vice and misery of the lower classes, and the pride and selfishness of the higher ones, cause mutual and wide disunion; while the universal diffusion of knowledge has led to innumerable differences of religious opinion, which serve to infuse additional asperity into the entire mass of the people. The national resources are expended in the erection of gaols and penitentiaries for the reception of criminals, and in the support of troops to protect the rulers from the fury of the ruled; while private individuals employ their means in building sectarian places of worship, and in endea-

vouring through the medium of missions to give the savages abroad a taste for the practice of those virtues which have latterly become vulgar and antiquated amongst themselves at home!

Having thus described the general characteristics of the Hindoo people, it now remains for me to enter into some personal details respecting them, and to speak of their domestic habits and relations. Hindostan certainly presents a larger proportion of well-formed men and women, whether we regard the higher or lower classes of its people, than any other country whatever. It is true that few of the male Asiatics display that sinewy and muscular vigour which in Europe is generally considered essential to the perfect beauty of the male figure; but in gracefulness of gesture and pliancy of deportment they altogether excel the handsomest men of northern climates. In India, contrary to what is observed almost anywhere else, the best-proportioned people are found amongst the labouring part of the community; for those of a superior class are too often slender and effeminate when young, and clumsy and corpulent in after-life. A foreigner, on first arriving in India, is impressed with the idea that all the Hindoos closely resemble each other in features and expression of countenance, and he is very liable to mistake one individual for another, even though he

may have been in the habit of daily seeing both of them; and it must be admitted that the most practised observer cannot discover in the Asiatic population that variety of physiognomy which exists amongst Europeans, whatever may be their country or their condition. The contour of the Hindoo face presents nothing angular or salient; the features are generally regular, and the chin and forehead smooth and rounded, the eyes dark and large, and the hair soft and without curls or ringlets; these characters render the expression mild and tranquil; and if it is often destitute of vivacity, it is scarcely ever mean or disagreeable.

The striking gracefulness of carriage observable in the labouring Hindoos, both male and female, results in a great measure from their habit of carrying burdens of every kind upon their heads. A copper jar or other vessel containing three or four gallons of water, or a box or bale weighing twenty or thirty pounds, is not considered too heavy or unwieldy to be borne and balanced upon the crown of the head; and the person thus loaded will walk several miles without once requiring to adjust his burden, so exactly does he maintain the spine in the due line of the centre of gravity; and while it continues there, the body and limbs must necessarily be thrown

into a natural and easy position. Some Europeans in India, sensible of the advantages of this kind of exercise, make their children walk about their houses for a certain time every day, carrying a moderate weight upon their heads; and the boy or girl thus treated seldom fails to acquire a fine and imposing carriage, which is never afterwards entirely lost.

Though Europeans have had establishments in India more than three hundred years, and though they have during that period diffused themselves over a vast extent of its territories, and carried on a long series of transactions, both commercial and political, with the natives, it is very certain that we know actually nothing of their private life and domestic feelings and opinions, beyond the superficial acquaintance with each, which we have acquired from Hindoo literature. But those very prejudices which have always rendered the Hindoos extremely reserved upon such points even amongst themselves, would deter their dramatists and poets from describing in their writings the family manners and social habits of their countrymen; and therefore everything of the kind coming from their pens is to be received with due caution. No European is ever admitted into the house of a Hindoo, except to make a formal, or, rather, official visit; nor has he at such

times the smallest opportunity of seeing the style of his host's private establishment, or of learning anything upon the subject in the course of conversation, that being strictly confined to compliments and common-place remarks. Nor is it probable that an introduction to the domestic circle of even the best educated Hindoo would afford much gratification to an European, or display to his view human character under any anomalous or remarkable aspect. Languor and indolence on the part of the men, and childish desires on that of the females, might be expected to form the principal features of the picture, which, in however favourable a light it was placed, would fail to exhibit those contrasting shades and definite outlines which form the great charm of domestic life in those countries where social intercourse is unfettered by prejudices or by religious opinions.

The educated men amongst the Hindoos frequently employ their time in reading the Pooranas, and the various works of fiction which their language affords ; but as none of these books furnish any useful information on any just and extended views of human life, the perusal of them can be regarded only as an amusement, and does not serve to excite a love of knowledge in the mind of the student. The Hindoos read very slowly, and

reflect and comment upon every separate passage of their author, though it may in reality neither deserve the first nor require the latter. A small volume consequently engages them a long time, and the libraries of the most learned individuals appear insignificant in so far as the number of books is concerned. The scientific works of the Hindoos, whether astronomical, medical, or mathematical, are scarcely procurable either by natives or Europeans the Brahmans jealously retaining them in their own hands. But the usual style of these treatises is so mysterious and obscure, that no one can comprehend much of them, unless he has previously been instructed how to explain the enigmas and allegories with which they abound.

None of the fine arts are now cultivated in Hindostan, except music, for which the natives have a strong relish. They never, however, practise it in private, the art of playing upon any instrument being accounted degrading in itself, and suitable for those persons only who make a profession of it. Perhaps it is owing to this prejudice that the Hindoos have made very little progress in musical taste or knowledge; for the general adoption of the art amongst any people as a domestic amusement, encourages public performers to aspire to excellence, in order that they

may be employed to teach others; while at the same time the composers of music, deriving profit and celebrity from the sale of their productions, find it their interest to devote themselves to the improvement of these, and to study to invent new combinations of harmony. It does not appear that the stock of melodies possessed by the Hindoos is at all increasing, or that new ones are ever introduced from abroad. Nevertheless, these people feel no monotony in the frequent repetition of the same airs; and they will listen with rapture to the nautch girls for five or six hours at a time, though they may not comprehend the words of their songs.

We have no reason to believe that the art of painting was ever much esteemed in India. As the Hindoos have at all times adorned their temples and public edifices exclusively with statues, the painter's skill was necessarily little in request amongst them; and the few pictures that we do find in the country are remarkable for those glaring defects which seem to attach themselves to the productions of the artists of all tropical regions. The total ignorance of perspective and chiaro obscuro, and the hardness and stiffness of outline, which characterise the paintings of the Hindoos, the Chinese, the Mexicans, and the ancient Egyptians, are circumstances equally notorious and

perplexing; and the only plausible theory that has ever been advanced upon the subject is the one which supposes that the perpetual sunshine, and strong reflection of light in hot regions, injure the vision of their inhabitants, and render them incapable of estimating distances and proportions by the eye. I am the more inclined to this opinion, because I have found that the generality of the natives of India neither relish nor comprehend the system of perspective and light and shade which is adopted by European painters. On viewing our landscapes, or groups of figures, an Hindoo will remark, in reference to those parts of the piece where the relief is strongest, that the objects are of two colours, a dark and a bright one; and he will inquire why the figures of men or animals, that may be represented far in the back-ground, are not equally large with those in front. The lower classes of people in India have not the smallest idea of symmetry in the arrangement of furniture, or in the disposal of table equipage; and it is not till after they have been some time in the service of Europeans that they are able to lay a carpet exactly in the centre of a room, or place two couches or similar articles in the same relative position. Their masters commonly attribute this to stupidity, though it evidently enough arises from defective vision, con-

sequent upon long-continued irritation of the optic nerve by the glare of a tropical sun.

The Brahmans have always taken great pleasure in metaphysical disputations; and they conduct these with an acuteness and subtilty which is peculiar to themselves, and which is displayed in a transcendant degree in the writings of many of their ancient philosophers. The web of Hindoo philosophy is infinitely more complicated in its texture, and curious in the adaption of its parts, than that of any other nation whatever, not even excepting the Kantism of Germany; and it is very certain that nearly all the most celebrated ethical and metaphysical systems and theories of the moderns had their origin in India, and were promulgated and discussed there, many centuries before they appeared in Europe under a new dress. Even the celebrated and apparently original system of Descartes is distinctly recognisable in the doctrines of the Sankhiya Brahmans, which were taught in Hindostan twelve or fourteen hundred years ago.

The passion for philosophical argument was formerly so great amongst the Brahmans, that many of them used to travel over India with the sole view of enjoying disputations with the various learned men whom they might happen to encounter in the course of their journeys. On

arriving at any large town, they would give public notice that they were ready to enter the lists with all who were disposed for controversy, and the assemblages of pundits thus convoked would hold long and daily meetings, and continue them till the subjects chosen for discussion were exhausted. Something of this kind occasionally takes place in the present day, and there are many instances of Brahmans and Mahomedans challenging the missionaries to defend their religion. These disputations, as may be supposed, commonly end as they began. The following account of a subha or meeting of the former description, which took place at Poona in 1831, is extracted from a newspaper, edited by a native, and published in Bombay, and will serve to show that a taste for metaphysics still prevails amongst the Hindoos of the higher class:—"An apartment in an upper-roomed house was prepared for the company, furnished with lamps, &c. and decorated in a magnificent style. The gentlemen present being seated, a learned person of this city rose, and said, 'It is the humble solicitation of our host, that subjects from the four Shastras, the Vyakurn (grammar), the Nyaya (logic), the Meemansa (ceremonials), and the Vedant (a philosophical system, which teaches the nature of the Deity and the universe), be introduced for discussion here, as it is not always

easy in this city to get a person like Moreshwar Shastree, capable of discussing all of them, to preside at such a meeting.' The learned persons present were delighted on hearing this; and while they were thinking of a subject to begin with, a student introduced a question on Vyakurn, on which an able debate was held by Moreshwar Shastree and Vyasachariya. A topic on Nyaya was then introduced, in which again the former individuals were the principal speakers. Other pundits joined occasionally in the discussion, and made speeches. Lastly, an objection was raised by Vyankutachariya against the Advyta Vedant, (the doctrine of the identity of the human soul and the divine essence, and of the unreality of matter.) This was answered by Moreshwar Shastree, explaining what was meant by the denial of the existence of matter. A question on Meemansa was afterwards started, but it was not well managed."

A reference to the general character of the religion of the Hindoos, and to the principal features of their metaphysical and philosophical systems, will serve to account for the propensity which they have always shown to enter into discussions upon these subjects. The wonderful fantastic and perplexed nature of most of their doctrines is calculated equally to excite the imagination of those who admit them, and to keep alive in their

minds a restless desire to obtain some tangible and satisfactory notions upon points of so much intricacy and importance. The dogma of the transmigration of the soul, which is firmly believed by a vast majority of the Hindoos, is of itself sufficient to afford constant exercise to the faculties; and they are in the habit of considering any misfortunes that may befal them in this life, as a punishment for the evil they have committed in some former state of existence; and they estimate upon the same principle the past merits or demerits of animals, particularly domestic ones, by their general condition and treatment. The horse or dog that is well fed, and belongs to a kind master, is supposed to have committed fewer sins while it existed under a human form, than the animal of either species whose circumstances are less agreeable and supportable. The different transmigrations which a human being must undergo in expiation of different crimes, are laid down with exactness in the institutes of Menu; and, consequently, the sight of any particular animal mentioned in the list is calculated to suggest to an instructed Hindoo some point in the history of its supposed mortal occupant, and to give birth to various interesting speculations, which cannot be indulged by those who reject the doctrine of metempsychosis.

The monotonous character which domestic life assumes amongst the Hindoos, from their not cultivating the fine arts, or any of those social amusements which are so highly esteemed by Europeans, is somewhat relieved by the frequent occurrence of national festivals and holydays, which, both in number and duration, exceed those of any other country. The holydays that are more or less observed throughout Hindostan, amount to at least one hundred in every year; and they prove a source of serious loss and inconvenience to foreigners transacting business there, both commerce and labour being in a great measure suspended upon such occasions. Almost every Hindoo, whether high or low, is in the habit of spending his time and money in the celebration of these festivals, or at least of some of them; nor during their continuance will he attend to anything else, even though his interests should suffer from his negligence. It is truly wonderful to observe with what enthusiasm the poorest individuals take part in the games, sports, and processions which are carried on at such times. The half-naked labourer, who can seldom earn more than three-pence a day, and whose food is rice and pulse without seasoning or addition, will dance for hours together in the open air, or join in the chorus of a song during an entire night, or follow at a cur-

veting pace a band of music for many miles in the heat of the meridian sun; and he will occupy himself in this way for several days in succession, unsupported by any stimulus except the natural buoyancy of his animal spirits. If the proceedings of the Hindoos during their national festivals appear to us puerile and absurd, we must in justice to them admit, that at such times they display a gentleness of disposition and a spirit of concord which are unknown anywhere else upon similar occasions. Some exceptions to this occur now and then amongst the Mahomedans at the celebration of the Mohurrum, when the bier of Hosein is carried in procession by torch-light. The two great Mussulman sects are then liable to quarrel about precedence in the line of march through the streets, and violent affrays sometimes take place between them. I have already made some remarks upon the tolerant spirit of the Hindoos; and the existence of this quality is strongly evinced in the fact, that though most of their festivals bear a religious character, they not only seldom quarrel while engaged in them, but never seek to annoy the Mahomedans when the latter are employed in celebrating their own holydays, though they condemn the followers of the Prophet, and abstain from any particular intercourse with them.

The Abbé Dubois justly remarks, that a popu-

lar prejudice respecting the wealth of the inhabitants of India has existed from the remotest times. "The treasures," says he, "collected by some of its princes, the large and rapid fortunes which a great number of Europeans have acquired in the country, the rich produce of its mines of diamonds, the quantity and quality of its pearls, the abundance of its spices and aromatic woods, the fertility of its soil, and the long unrivalled superiority of its various manufactures, were known and admired in the earliest ages, and it was naturally supposed that a nation that furnished so many articles of luxury must exceed all others alike in opulence and industry." But he asserts that no conclusion can be more erroneous, and that India is in reality the poorest country in the world; the value of the personal property of nine-twentieths of its inhabitants falling short of the proportion of five pounds sterling to each individual family.

Nor would it appear that the above estimate is an incorrect one; and if poverty, under its severest and most undisguised form, seldom meets the eye in India, it is more owing to the contentedness and sobriety of the people, than to the general diffusion of the means of subsistence amongst them. But it is not my intention to inquire into the distribution of property in Hindostan, but rather to make some remarks upon that state or

indigence which has been regarded as a characteristic of the great mass of society in all parts of the East, and which different writers have attributed to different causes. We well know that at least four-fifths of the entire population of the warm regions of Asia have barely sufficient to support them in their respective ranks of life, and that they are contented with this, and seldom make any efforts to improve their means and extend their enjoyments. That desire of accumulating money and possessing various kinds of property, which operates so universally amongst Europeans, is almost unfelt by the Hindoos; and they never abandon the natural simplicity of their habits and mode of life, even when immense riches enable them to do so. They neither fill their stables with horses, nor their houses with ornamental furniture, nor cover themselves with finery, nor load their tables with splendid services of plate. On the contrary, they remain contented with the simple domestic equipage to which they have always been accustomed; and their wealth is allowed to lie unemployed, until a marriage or festival affords them an opportunity of bringing a part of it into circulation, which they then do with a degree of liberality and extravagance more than sufficient to prove that it was not avarice that had previously limited their expenditure. Any

exceptions to the above remarks that may occur, will be found only amongst Hindoo merchants, who, from living in the great commercial cities of India, have acquired European ideas on the subject of wealth, and a taste for accumulating it in a systematic way.

This peculiarity in the character of the Asiatics has been ascribed by some to a natural and unconquerable indolence, nursed and fostered by the belief in the dogma of predestination; and, by others, to the influence of a despotic government, where the people, having no security of person or property, are deterred from seeking to acquire wealth, from the uncertainty of their being able to retain or enjoy it. Volney is disposed to adopt the latter opinion; nor is it surprising that he should be so, for his observations upon the Asiatics were made in Syria and Egypt, where the Turks exercise absolute dominion, and continually oppress and impoverish the inhabitants by a system of rigorous and indiscriminate extortion. But if we look towards British India, we shall find the same results existing under very different circumstances. There every man may amass wealth in peace, and expend it without fear, or bequeath it to his relatives, in the assurance that his intentions will be fulfilled; but, nevertheless, we observe much the same indifference to riches

in the mass of the Hindoo population, as Volney remarked amongst the Turks and Syrians. It would therefore appear that this national characteristic of the Asiatics has no direct connexion with the nature of the government under which they may happen to live, but arises from their constitutional indolence and contentedness, and from their aversion to that state of anxiety and excitement which attends the pursuit of riches, and is so hostile to all those sedate and contemplative forms of enjoyment in which they chiefly delight.

British India affords daily examples of the Asiatic mode of spending a fortune *en masse*, to which I have above alluded. The Hindoos often spend upon the marriage ceremonies of their children sums which, if given to the parties as a dowry, would render them opulent during their whole lives; and long-established custom has so far accredited this ruinous and unsatisfactory kind of extravagance, that every rich man is obliged more or less to conform to it, if he has any regard for the esteem and respect of society, though he may entirely disapprove of the practice. This nuptial expenditure in a great measure prevents the Hindoos from providing for their children in the way that European parents generally endeavour to do; neither have they the same ideas respecting the stability of wealth that are current

amongst ourselves; and they commonly lavish away the greater part of what they do possess in the course of their own lives.

But while we condemn the ostentatious extravagance of the Hindoos on their marriages and at public festivals, and their general improvidence in the management and disposal of their fortunes, we must at the same time view with admiration the noble use to which they often apply their riches. In every part of India are to be found monuments of the munificence and charity of private individuals, in the shape of reservoirs for water, pagodas, wells, or caravanseras; but, of whatever description these may be, they are invariably intended for the benefit of mankind. He who expends thousands in the formation of a tank which shall supply with water thousands of his fellow-creatures, who would otherwise be liable to suffer the greatest extremities from drought, surely deserves the name of a benefactor of the human race; as also does he that builds a house for the shelter and convenience of travellers in some desolate spot where no other accommodation is to be found. Works of public charity are so much esteemed by the Hindoos, that those who cannot accomplish them on a large scale, will sometimes hire a person to sit under a tree by the road-side, with vessels of cool water for the supply of thirsty

passengers; or will monthly, on a particular day, give a quantity of grain to every mendicant who may present himself at their doors. Yet the detractors of the Hindoos do not hesitate to assert that all their acts of this kind proceed from ostentation. I will reply to this only by remarking, that it would be well if a similar spirit of ostentation could be introduced into Europe, since it is attended with such happy effects in Hindostan. But a man may travel from the southern extremity of the continent to the polar regions without observing one monument of charity or utility which has been devised or erected by private munificence. What European nobleman or wealthy citizen ever thinks of expending his money in the construction of any work of art which shall benefit a whole town or village, or call forth the blessings and admiration of the passing traveller? To see how such persons employ their wealth, it is necessary to visit their castles and houses. There we shall find the apartments encumbered with fantastic pieces of furniture, and the walls nearly concealed by pictures of imaginary value; while in various corners stand tables and cabinets, displaying the varieties of art and the monstrosities of nature, multiplied to the eye by the reflection of enormous mirrors. The vapid owner of the mansion saunters from one place to

another, and perhaps tries in vain to find either amusement or instruction in contemplating the heap of anomalous baubles which he has spent half his fortune in collecting, and which his refined taste and his refined selfishness nevertheless render him desirous of retaining in his possession and augmenting, even though the cries of the neighbouring poor should daily plead against his doing either. Once or twice a year he bestows a trifling amount upon some public institution, and conceives that by this paltry sacrifice he has liquidated his arrears of charity to his fellow-beings, and obtained a dispensation to employ his remaining wealth in procuring the purposeless materials of his personal pleasures; or in visiting foreign countries, where, careless of instruction, he studies nothing but the vices and vanities of their inhabitants. The Hindoo style of charity must always bear the appearance of ostentation, because its character is so striking and comprehensive as to attract the notice of the least inquiring or observing individual.

The Hindoos being a mild, peaceable, and easy-tempered people, they live together in great harmony; and the streets of their towns and villages seldom present scenes of riot or social disturbance. They fulfil the relative duties of life with tolerable exactness, and are naturally kind

and indulgent to each other, and always ready to exercise the rites of hospitality, even when their poverty might exempt them from anything of the kind. Their domestic life, in so far as the married state is concerned, has little to recommend it; in particular amongst the higher classes, where the curse of polygamy and its accompanying debasement of the female character operate daily in one way or another, and are more or less destructive of family peace and enjoyment, however much the parties may be disposed to humour and conciliate each other. In Hindostan, the females in the lowest grades of society are the happiest, because their husbands cannot afford to have more wives than one; and because, from their being obliged to contribute their share of labour for the family subsistence, they enjoy the freedom of going abroad, and associating with their neighbours of both sexes — while Hindoo etiquette forbids that women of the higher class should do either. The wives of mechanics, artisans, and day labourers appear upon the streets and highways in as open and unconstrained a manner as a similar class of people do in Europe; and the domestic affairs of the household being exclusively under their management, they acquire a degree of independence and importance in the eyes of their husbands, which goes far to ensure them respect and kind

treatment at home. Many of the poorer Hindoos are very happily married, and love their partners with strong and durable affection; an uncommon circumstance amongst the wealthy polygamists, in whose houses there is a continual division of interests instead of a bond of sympathy.

None of the domestic relations of the Hindoos appear so amiable or praiseworthy as that of filial affection; in this they are never deficient; and they honour and respect their fathers and mothers to an extreme degree, and consider it a sacred duty to support them to the end of their days when they happen to be in a state of indigence. This strong sense of filial obligation operates equally amongst the rich and the poor; and it is a common thing to find Hindoos in the humblest walks of life monthly bestowing one-third or even half of their scanty earnings upon an aged and destitute parent. Indeed the natives of India scarcely regard these sacrifices as meritorious; and the inhumanity of the individual who refuses to practise them when they become requisite, excites more notice than the kindness of the devoted son who gives all that he can possibly spare to relieve the wants of the authors of his existence. They even manifest a sacred regard for their parents after the latter have ceased to live, and perform sacrifices, &c. for the benefit of their souls. One

striking instance of this kind occurred within my own observation. At a certain festival in Hindostan, it is customary for the people holding it to erect a long pole, upon the top of which is fixed a cross beam, having a large iron hook swung by ropes to each extremity. When a devotee wishes to perform penance, one of these hooks is lowered to the ground, where he has previously laid himself flat upon his face, and is forced through the fleshy part of his back. He is then hoisted up to the height of fifteen or twenty feet, and remains suspended in that situation till he requests to be relieved from his misery. I found one of my servants undergoing this penance; and on afterwards inquiring into his motives for having done so, he told me that his father had made a vow to suffer eight suspensions, but not living long enough to perform more than five, he had on his deathbed requested his son to accomplish the remaining part of his vow, which the latter said he intended rigorously to do. An indifference to pain, where religion and conscience are concerned, has always been a characteristic of the Hindoos; and, however much we may condemn their often irrational and superstitious motives for such exertions of constancy and fortitude, we must give them due credit for their distinguished powers of endurance, however misdirected these may be. It

was a view of exhibitions similar in principle to the one above described, that used to lead the Jesuit missionaries in India to exclaim, "What glorious Christians these people would make!"

The timid and fickle dispositions of the Hindoos, and the puerility of their ideas upon many subjects, seem entirely at variance with their devoted and unconquerable attachment to their national manners and religion, and with the sacrifices which they are ever ready to make for the sake of both. We call this obstinacy, and the triumph of ignorance and prejudice, because we are too much accustomed to consider everything subordinate to self-interest, and to render our opinions and actions conformable to its dictates. No prospect of personal advantage will induce the genuine and conscientious Hindoo to quit his country, or to renounce its customs, or to adopt those of foreigners; and the happy effect of this is to set bounds to his desires, to confine him to the region in which Providence has placed him, and to prevent his warring with other races of people, or creating dissension amongst them by the intrusion and enforcement of his peculiar opinions. Admitting that he is actuated in all this by irrational motives, we must still admire the consistency, sobriety, moderation, and harmlessness of character which they produce, and allow to the Hindoo

people the proud distinction of being the only civilized nation upon earth that has never injured, annoyed, or massacred any of its neighbours. On the other hand, the enlightened and adventurous European feels from his earliest years the advantage of making himself all things to all men; and, unchecked by the useful influence of prejudice, and often unrestrained by religion, he overruns the earth, and finds no condition or employment either base or revolting, so long as it enables him to gratify his avarice. In the wilds of North America we observe him trafficking with savages for the skins of beasts, and overreaching them when they are in a state of intoxication from the liquors which they have received from his own hands. On the coast of Africa he is to be found purchasing his fellow-creatures for trinkets and brandy, with a view of selling them to slavery elsewhere. In Japan he annually makes a public denial of his faith by trampling under his foot the Cross and Bible, in order to secure the privilege of trading with a people who detest and execrate Christians. In the South Sea Islands he employs his ships and artillery in the service of the native chief who will pay him best, and assists in massacring his employer's enemies or revolted subjects, without inquiring or caring which party is the aggrieved one. In the cities of Turkey

and Barbary we find him submitting, for the sake of commerce, to be reviled, bastinadoed, and spit upon by Mahomedans, who consider him a dog and an infidel, and unworthy of respect or commiseration: and should any foreign power require mercenary troops, thousands of Europeans are ever willing to embody themselves under its standard, be the cause what it may; and if they are seldom guilty of fighting against their own countrymen, they are deterred rather by a dread of the penalty which they might thereby incur, than by any sense of the detestableness of the act itself.

It is, however, to the extinction of religious prejudices that nations owe that commercial opulence which is alone regarded by them as an object of ambition in the present age. The Pharaohs tried in vain to make the ancient Egyptians a maritime and commercial people, nor would they become so till after Cambyses had conquered the country and annihilated their religion. An Englishman and a Brahman conversing upon the character and merits of their respective nations, the first boasted that the British, though an inconsiderable people in point of numbers compared with the Hindoos, far surpassed them in wealth, power, and extent of dominions. "True," replied the Brahman, "and the reason is, that your countrymen fear neither God nor the Devil."

It is the rigid and restraining influence of the national and religious opinions of the Hindoos which has hitherto prevented their advancing to a very high degree of civilization, or adopting European manners and modes of thinking. Nor can they comprehend why the British should be so anxious to introduce these into India, or so persevering in their condemnation of everything that does not accord with their own notions; for the Brahmans, notwithstanding their prejudices and high sense of self-superiority, never maintain that their own institutions are calculated for all nations and countries, but freely admit that different climates and races of men require different social and political systems. Knowing that the Hindoos have practised the same customs, and been governed by the same laws, for thousands of years, and that too with the happiest effects, they are naturally sceptical about the propriety or even safety of making any changes in reference to these points; and view with anger and detestation the endeavours of their foreign invaders to alter things which have been established and consecrated by the most remote antiquity. Nor is this all; for as the Brahmans have latterly, by acquiring a knowledge of the English language, enabled themselves to learn the real state of human society in Europe, they have become more than

ever distrustful of the influence of our laws and institutions as applied to their own countrymen, and less and less disposed to admit the superior happiness of European nations. From the histories, descriptions, and notices of these which they peruse, they find that the amount of moral and physical evil in all highly-civilized societies far exceeds what is known in Hindostan, and that the different classes of people composing them are disunited by opposite interests, and perpetually opposed to each other, and that they scarcely ever practise any of the virtues which are inculcated amongst them, except from self-interest or compulsion. They observe, also, that large standing armies are everywhere requisite to ensure the stability of the government, and to keep the lower orders of people in subjection; and that a great part of the national revenue is expended in the support of a vast and complicated judicial establishment, which nevertheless proves totally inadequate to repress crime, or even to bring the offenders to punishment; while that very system of religion, which instructs men to live in peace and forbearance, is converted into an engine of discord, and employed as an excuse for intolerance and persecution. Under these impressions, the more enlightened Hindoos naturally ask themselves, what shall we gain by adopting the social institu-

tions of Europe? Will not these, instead of remedying the evils that now exist amongst ourselves, serve to introduce new ones, to which we have hitherto been strangers? We may be in some degree enslaved by prejudices and superstitions; but since these have existed for thousands of years, and are congenial to the minds of the people, will it not be dangerous, both in a moral and physical point of view, to annihilate them, and thus dissolve the constitution of Hindoo society, without the certainty of being able to reorganize it on a better model?

The various attempts that have been made, and are still making, to give the natives of India a taste for European knowledge, and to convert them to Christianity, have been eminently unsuccessful, alike as respects the establishment of British schools and the labours of missionaries; and it would appear, that the better the Hindoos become acquainted with our social institutions and religion, the more repugnant do they find these to their prejudices and peculiar modes of thinking. The adults who attend the schools, whether public or private, are almost exclusively persons who wish to qualify themselves for some employment in the government offices, or in the counting-houses of European merchants; while a large proportion of the younger pupils consists of the off-

spring of individuals holding subordinate situations in the different departments of the public service, and desirous that their children should succeed them in these, or at least obtain some provision of a similar kind. The knowledge which both these classes of persons acquire in the schools often has the effect of shaking their belief in the Hindoo religion, and of rendering them free-thinkers, or even atheists; but it never in the least degree disposes them to receive Christianity, or to renounce the usages to which they have been accustomed. In their dress, manners, and mode of life, they resemble other Hindoos; while their conduct often proves the correctness of the maxim, that any religion is better than none at all. In short, the Hindoos esteem European acquirements only in so far as these can be made subservient to their personal interests; and a large number of pupils at any school can never be regarded as indicative of a prevailing disposition to embrace Christianity.

The small success which the missionaries have had in the conversion of the Hindoos is easily explained, by a reference to the national opinions and institutions of the latter, which form the strongest and most insurmountable barrier to innovation, either domestic or foreign, that ever was constructed by human ingenuity. But, in

addition to this, the missionaries have experienced a strong obstacle to the reception of their doctrines, in the subtle, inquiring, and argumentative spirit of the Brahmans, who are ever ready to enter into discussion with them, and to urge a multitude of insidious objections against the tenets which it is their business to inculcate and support. The career of a missionary in India is attended with difficulties which he would not encounter in almost any other country. The preacher who labours amongst a horde of savages, is generally listened to at first without interruption or dissent, partly from the indolence, and partly from the stupidity of his auditors; and if they are not convinced of the truth of what he says, they will affect to be so out of respect to their instructor. In the course of time they become reconciled to his doctrines, from frequently hearing them repeated, and afterwards, wearied by his solicitations, and perhaps encouraged by the prospect of personal advantage and convenience, they take up their residence in his neighbourhood, and form a social community, and assist him in building a church. Free from deep-rooted prejudices, wavering in their opinions, unaccustomed to exercise their faculties, and biassed by the superior intelligence of their teacher, they are easily led to renounce some of their objectionable

customs, and to attend divine worship at certain times. All this is supposed to imply their conversion, and they forthwith receive the title of Christians, and are considered as such by the generality of observers. But a work of this kind is not so easily accomplished in Hindostan, where the missionary, instead of being viewed with respect and consideration by the Brahmans, (and they rule the opinions of all the other castes,) is regarded as an inferior being, whom it is an act of condescension to listen to. Instead of finding himself surrounded by simple and ignorant men, neither accustomed to reasoning, nor wedded to any particular doctrines, he encounters the determined opposition of a haughty, artful, and sagacious race, familiar with the subtilties of refined argument, strongly prepossessed in favour of their own creed, and hostile alike from conscience and from private interest to any kind of foreign innovation. Most Europeans who have resided long in India are well acquainted with the superior argumentative powers of the Brahmans; and Hoole, in his account of his mission in that country, mentions that many of the Company's civil servants (all of whom are linguists) had complained to him that they in general found themselves overmatched by the former in the discussion of religious subjects; and it would appear, from the tenor of his narrative, that

he himself had very seldom come off triumphant on similar occasions.

Seeing, then, that the Hindoos are resolute in refusing to receive any improvement, either religious or political, from our hands, would it not be better that we should henceforth desist from attempting to force our institutions upon them, and allow them that tranquil enjoyment of their national opinions, which is the poorest boon that a conquered people can ask of their conquerors? It has always been found difficult to reconcile the interests of these two, but never so much so as in the case of Hindostan, where the intensely strong line of demarcation which exists between the character, manners, and sympathies of Europeans and natives will never be obliterated, because neither the one nor the other people will make any concession of its prejudices.

Let us, then, spare the Hindoos the torture of being forced to conform to our institutions, and to our notions of right and wrong, lest the work of adaptation should become as sanguinary in its nature as the one which history informs us was practised by the robber Procrustes; when, seized with the mania of making the statures of his captives correspond with the dimensions of his own bed, he either stretched their bodies till they were dissevered, or shortened them by mutilation, ac-

cording as they happened to fall short of, or exceed, his standard of human proportions. The vast social edifice of the Hindoos deserves to be viewed with respect from its antiquity alone; and though its proportions may be defective, and its design may embrace incongruities that are offensive to reason and to good taste, still all alterations must be attempted with extreme caution, lest, in carrying them into effect, the structure should lose its stability, and, falling down in ruins, crush its inhabitants, and along with them the inconsiderate renovators employed in the work of presumption.

EUROPEAN SOCIETY IN INDIA.

THE notices which I have to offer on the subject of European society in India will necessarily be meagre and deficient in variety. No Europeans having ever established themselves in the country with the intention of spending their lives there, they have always felt themselves to be in the situation of visiters and strangers, and have never undergone that assimilation to the climate and soil, which sooner or later occurs in the case of those individuals who have emigrated anywhere for the purpose of permanent settlement and naturalization. Hence, in tracing the history and describing the character and condition of the European inhabitants of Hindostan, we shall not find them, even on their first arrival there, struggling with physical difficulties, or in a state of petty hostility with the natives, or engaged in expeditions of discovery, or searching with avidity for gold-mines, or employed in agriculture or in the chase. Those scenes of wild adventure and

romantic enterprise which marked the appearance and early proceedings of Europeans in the New World, and in a few parts of the Old, never had any existence upon the shores of India; where the first adventurers, finding a powerful and a civilized people who despised foreigners, were restrained by prudence and fear and self-interest from attempting to invade and plunder their country in the usual style of European aggression. Even the idolatry of the Indians became respectable in the eyes of their foreign visiters, because their gods were adorned with gold and gems, and because their worshippers appeared to abound in wealth; and those very men, who would have waged a holy war against the Hindoo infidels had these been weak and poor and defenceless, used every means to flatter and conciliate them, under the idea that more spoil would be obtained in the last way than in the first. But if the domestic and personal history of the European residents of Hindostan presents little variety of character or circumstance, the political and military one of their respective nations abounds with extraordinary features, and embraces such a complicated system of mercantile enterprise, artful policy, brilliant valour, and prodigious sway, as is unfolded in the annals of no other country. Details of this nature, however, do not fall within the plan

of my work, and the reader will not in the following pages meet with any allusions to the political events that have led to the subjugation of India, except in so far as they may be essential to perspicuity, and illustrative of the subject before us.

The first Europeans who visited India, (at least as far as we know,) were Alexander the Great and his army; but traversing the country as conquerors, they could have had little intercourse with its inhabitants, and their sojourn there made so slight an impression upon the latter, that it is but faintly and obscurely adverted to in their traditions. Judging from the character of Alexander, we may fairly presume that he did not unnecessarily oppress the Hindoos, and that he respected their customs and religious belief. When the Gymnosophists, or more properly speaking the Vanaprasta or Sannyasa Brahmans, refused to attend his summons, he did not force them to comply; and the sage who asked him what purpose his thirst of extensive dominion would serve, since after death his body could occupy and possess only a few feet of ground, was heard with forbearance and even commendation. Had Alexander remained any length of time in India, it is probable that he would have accommodated himself to the customs of the country, and to the modes of thinking of its people, in the same manner as he

did in Persia. Either owing to the instructions of his liberal-minded preceptor Aristotle, or to an idea of his own immeasurable superiority to all other men, the Macedonian hero had divested himself of the prejudices that prevailed amongst the Greeks in reference to other nations, and did not regard all foreigners as barbarians, or maintain that none of them practised any customs worthy of imitation, or knew anything that it was desirable to know. But if Alexander was disposed to be one of the mildest and most conciliating of conquerors, his soldiers were of a very different character; and it is a happy circumstance that he did not leave any garrisons in India, for the Greeks would undoubtedly have treated the Hindoos with cruelty and contempt, not more because of the peculiar manners and mode of life of the latter, than on account of that want of military valour with which they have so often been reproached by Europeans, but which arose in those times from the principles of equity adopted by the ancient sovereigns of India, who, never aspiring to extend their dominions, or seeking occasions to plunder their neighbours, had no object in cultivating the arts of war, or cherishing a martial spirit amongst the people.

Shortly after the death of Alexander the Great, Seleucus Nicanor, who succeeded to his Persian

conquests, sent Megasthenes on an embassy to the Indian sovereign, whose capital was the celebrated city of Palibothra, the site of which has been so often a subject of doubt and discussion. Here Megasthenes resided for several years, and wrote a description of what he observed; but his work is no longer in existence; a circumstance much to be regretted, for it most probably contained many domestic details in reference to his intercourse with the Hindoos, and to the manner in which he lived amongst them and was affected by their personal habits and opinions.

We learn nothing more of the visits of Europeans to India (if any such did occur) till the middle of the thirteenth century, when Marco Polo, the Venetian traveller, published an account of his abode in various parts of the country, whither he was sent by the Grand Khan or Tartar Emperor of China. Polo's narrative is meagre and unsatisfactory, and exhibits him in the character of a merchant, rather than of an instructive and animated observer; for though the particulars which he gives respecting the Hindoos are in most instances strictly correct, they are altogether general in their application, and he never describes what his personal feelings were during his residence amongst them, or whether the difference of his habits and mode of life subjected

him at such times to any perplexity or inconvenience. It ought, however, to be remarked, that his long abode at a Tartar court had probably caused him to forget his European prejudices, and had rendered him less sensitive to those prevailing in India than he would otherwise have been.

It was not till the end of the fifteenth century that Europeans were brought into close collision with the Hindoos, and led to conceive the design of appropriating to themselves their commerce and their seaports, and of forming establishments in a country which had long been supposed to lie beyond the reach of the inhabitants of the Western world, and to possess a climate to which their constitutions could never become assimilated. In 1499, the Portuguese navigator Vasco de Gama appeared before Calicut, on the Malabar coast, and announced himself as the ambassador of a powerful European sovereign; but being unprovided with suitable presents for the Zamorin or Indian prince whose territories he had approached, and exciting the jealousy of the Arab merchants settled there, his assertions were at first discredited, and his overtures of alliance received with indifference and even contempt. However, it was enough for De Gama that he had discovered the long-sought passage to the Indies; and he hastened homewards to communicate that important intelligence to the

court of Portugal, by whose instructions a new expedition on a large scale was shortly fitted out, and despatched, under the command of Cabral, with the object of forming commercial establishments in the East. Cabral, on reaching Calicut, was treated much as his predecessor had been, and ere long he came to hostilities with the people, and was obliged to proceed along the coast in search of a more favourable reception. This he obtained at Cochin, the sovereign of which being under the yoke of the Zamorin, and desirous of shaking it off, willingly entered into an alliance with his foreign visiters against their common enemy. He allowed the Portuguese to build a fort and a factory within his territories, and thus enabled them to commence a system of conquest, which soon involved him in destruction, and eventually extended to the remotest parts of the coast of Hindostan.

At the beginning of the sixteenth century. the Eastern and Western worlds were alike suffering the ravages of European conquerors, and presented equally extraordinary examples of desperate courage and of individual energy. It is difficult to determine whether the Portuguese in India, or the Spaniards in America, performed the most brilliant actions, or were guilty of the greatest excesses; for the theatres of their respective

exploits had few points of resemblance. The Portuguese, making war upon a civilized people, were assailed by weapons similar to their own, though less skilfully managed, and had to engage with armies of embodied troops, instead of tribes of wandering savages; but the country which they invaded was rich in supplies, and they confined their operations to its coasts, while their fleets generally lay close by in readiness to afford them protection, and even refuge, in case of reverse. The Spaniards, on the other hand, were opposed by men who neither used fire-arms, nor knew how to construct fortifications, nor to rally after a defeat; however, they pursued their conquests far in the interior of wild and unfruitful territories, and suffered incredible hardships from fatigue and famine, and were seldom within the reach of assistance from their own countrymen. The distinction between the character of the conquests effected by the two European powers in question consists, if I may use the expression, in those of the Portuguese being national, and those of the Spaniards individual; for the court of Portugal always supplied armaments for the subjugation of Hindostan, while the Spanish government only encouraged adventurers to invade America at their private risk and expense.

Nearly all the most important exploits of the

Portuguese in the East Indies were maritime ones, and it was principally by their navy that they extended their conquests, and established their dominion. The numerous fleets of the native princes were in many instances dispersed and destroyed by a few Portuguese ships of war, which derived this superiority less from their magnitude and well-managed artillery, than from the power of out-manœuvring the enemy, which a knowledge of European nautical tactics conferred, comparatively defective as these must have been at the period in question. Accounts, more or less exaggerated, of all the general actions that took place on the coasts of India between the Portuguese and the native sovereigns have been preserved; but they embrace little of that personal adventure which communicates variety to scenes of the kind, generally in other respects monotonous, and conveys an accurate idea of the individual character and habits of feeling of the contending parties. In the history of the Portuguese conquests, we meet with few examples of desperate enterprise and strange vicissitude, similar to what attended the subjugation of America by the Spaniards; but this is not to be attributed to the inferior valour of the former nation, but to the nature of the country which formed the scene of their victories, and the civilized character of the

people who inhabited it. In the following anecdote, however, we find a characteristic instance of that enthusiastic military ardour which generally animated European conquerors at the beginning of the fifteenth century.

The taking of Calicut was one of the first exploits of the celebrated Albuquerque after his arrival in India. In that affair he was assisted by Marechal Coutinho, who had previously made it a condition that he should command the advanced guard, and make the first attack. The troops being disembarked, the Marechal proceeded leisurely towards the city at the head of his division, while Albuquerque led his men to the assault by a different route, as had been agreed upon; but having, either intentionally or otherwise, got the start of Coutinho, he began the action without waiting for him. Coutinho, on discovering this, was inflamed with rage, and, conceiving that he had been insulted and betrayed, he tore off his helmet, and, dashing it and his arms to the ground, called to his attendants to procure him a cap and a cane. Having received these, he hastened towards Albuquerque, and cried, "Is it thus, Sir, that you keep your faith? You doubtless hope to have the satisfaction of informing his Majesty that you were the first man to enter Calicut; but I will take especial care to let him know what sort

of people these Indians are, of whose prowess you send him such exaggerated accounts. He will learn how to estimate them, when I tell him that I forced my way into the city, having only a cap on my head and a cane in my hand."

Though the Portuguese established several factories on the Malabar coast shortly after their arrival in India, they cannot be considered to have properly settled in the country till the year 1510, when Albuquerque captured the city of Goa, and fixed the seat of the colonial government there. This circumstance, conjoined with the favourable position of Goa for commerce, drew a great number of Portuguese to the spot, and its European population soon became considerable. It was now for the first time that the collision of opposite prejudices and discordant religious opinions began to be experienced; for the Portuguese had hitherto seldom come into contact with the natives of India except in the course of war or commercial transactions, and nearly all of the latter were conducted by Moors or Mahomedans, whose particular creed did not offer any obstacles to their free communication with foreigners. But no sooner had the Portuguese fixed their residence amongst the Hindoos of various castes, who formed a considerable portion of the population of Goa, than causes of public and private disturbance

daily arose, during which excesses were often committed by both parties. These evils at length increased to such a degree, that Albuquerque, in order to check them, divided the city into several quarters, one of which was allotted to his countrymen, while the Hindoos, the Mahomedans, and Malabarites occupied the others respectively; the gates of each of them being closed at a certain hour every night, in order to prevent any irregular communication between the different classes of inhabitants. About this period the Portuguese established themselves in Malacca, and regulations similar to the above were put in force there; for no sooner did the Europeans and Indians come into contact, of whatever race or caste the latter might be, than affrays and excesses took place which often led to fatal consequences.

It is agreed by all writers, that the most frightful dissoluteness of manners began at an early period to prevail in the Portuguese settlements in India. This general corruption was produced and fostered by the temperature of the country, the luxurious idleness of the Europeans residing in it, and the mild and unresisting character of its native inhabitants. Had those Portuguese, who held offices and appointments at such places as Goa and Malacca, been required to devote themselves to business, or had their personal interests

encouraged them to do so, habits of industry and occupation would have prevented, or at least partly restrained, the developement of their passions; but, on the contrary, living in absolute idleness, and devolving their duties upon deputies and dependants, they cultivated licentiousness as a pastime, and found a solace in the practice of all kinds of depravity. They did not, indeed, wantonly shed blood, or commit unmeaning acts of cruelty, like the Spaniards in America; but in sensual excesses, base desires, and desperate profligacy, they far surpassed them. "The gentlemen in particular," says Lafitau, "were distinguished for the most unbridled licence; as if it were a privilege of persons of high birth to do more evil than their neighbours. Despising the common people, and, above all, the Hindoos and Mahomedans, they subjected them to all sorts of injustices and insults, regardless of what was due to their station or their persons. They carried off their wives and their daughters, and deprived individuals of liberty, often with the sole view of gratifying propensities at which nature shudders; and, to crown the whole, these guilty ravishers of the property and honour of their fellow-creatures often formed designs against the lives of those whom they had maltreated, and rendered themselves doubly obnoxious by their acts of assassina-

tion, which had become so frequent that it was dangerous to go abroad."

It was during the prevalence of this state of things that the celebrated Francis Xavier arrived in India; and, while he deplored the general corruption of manners amongst the Portuguese, his apostolical zeal was augmented by a consideration of the extensiveness of the field which demanded his labours. He found the churches and confessionals of Goa deserted, and religion and its ministers treated with indifference and contempt; while every private house contained a seraglio, or nightly exhibited scenes of profligate enjoyment. Concubines and female slaves were publicly bought and sold; the officers of justice received bribes; usury prevailed to an excessive degree; and assassination was of such common occurrence that the act had ceased to be regarded as a crime. Xavier devoted himself exclusively to the work of reformation; and every morning he traversed the principal streets of Goa, ringing a small bell, and exhorting the passengers to repentance. He was particularly desirous of removing the evil of concubinage, which existed to a great extent amongst the Portuguese; and in order to effect this, he did everything in his power to conciliate the offenders, and to gain their esteem and confidence, and often visited them, and even proposed that he should be

a guest at their tables. On these occasions, seizing a favourable opportunity, he would desire his host to favour him with a sight of his children, when, having caressed them affectionately, he would next propose that the mother should make her appearance. If she happened to be fair-complexioned and handsome, he would express his admiration to her gallant, and say, "You possess a charming slave, who is in every respect worthy to become your wife;" but if she was black and unprepossessing, he would exclaim, "Why do you keep such a monster in your house — how can you endure the sight of her?" These and similar expressions, combined with moral advice, had generally so great an effect upon the polygamist, that he would marry the female whom Xavier had commended, and dismiss the others from his house.

The system of concubinage which I have described as prevailing so universally at Goa, would seem to imply that there were few Portuguese ladies in the Indies at that time, or at least that they had little influence in the society there. About the period in question, however, several females, the wives of European officers, distinguished themselves in the fortress of Diu when it was besieged by Soliman Pacha. On that occasion a lady named Isabella de Vega assembled her

companions, and exhorted them to assist their husbands in repelling the enemy, and called to their remembrance various instances of female heroism which had occurred in former times. Her eloquence had the desired effect; and a small band of amazons immediately volunteered their services, and proceeded under her orders to employ themselves in carrying arms and ammunition to the soldiers requiring them, and even occasionally mingled in the fight, and exposed themselves to imminent personal danger. But this exhibition of courage does not imply that the parties who made it possessed that refinement of mind and manners which elevate the female character in the eyes of men, and which render them ambitious of pleasing the other sex, and willing to do so, even at the expense of their passions and their pleasures.

The settlement of Goa rapidly attained a high degree of political grandeur, private opulence, and commercial prosperity, and it was in the zenith of its glory a few years after the conquest of the celebrated fortress of Diu had secured to the Portuguese the sovereignty of the coasts of Western India. The ambition and insolence of that nation increased in proportion to the extension of its power; and the rapacity or the tyrannical actions of individuals were neither noticed nor re-

pressed so long as they involved only the natives of the country, who were regarded by their invaders as a race too contemptible to deserve any respect or consideration. The Indian fleet annually brought out a crowd of adventurers from Portugal, who settled themselves at Goa, or Melliapour, or Malacca, or at other places of minor importance, and immediately began to turn their attention to the rapid acquirement of wealth. Some of these men obtained situations under government, in which they practised all manner of extortion; others became bankers and merchants; and not a few daring and desperate characters betook themselves to piracy, and amassed riches by plundering the ships of the Mahomedans and Arabians. Every Portuguese emigrant, however humble his birth and pretensions might be, assumed the rank of a hidalgo, or gentleman, as soon as he had doubled the Cape of Good Hope; while, on his arrival in India, the humility and respect with which the Indians conducted themselves towards him, served to increase his idea of his own importance, and the example of his countrymen encouraged him to commit every kind of excess that might suggest itself to his exhilarated imagination.

But, nevertheless, the combined effects of the disorders committed by private individuals, of

much public mal-administration, and of the inveterate hatred of the natives of the country, did not for a considerable time materially affect the prosperity which the Portuguese enjoyed in India; and had no rival European nation assailed them there, it is probable that their power would have long continued without sensible decline. As it was, it lasted in its height exactly one century, that is to say, from the taking of Goa in 1510 to the period of the successful competition of the Dutch in 1610.

But the town of Goa, though the seat of the viceroyalty of the Indies, and containing a large European population, always preserved its Asiatic character; and its Portuguese inhabitants, intolerant and imperious as they were, found it necessary to make many concessions in favour of the prejudices of the natives, and to permit them to live and dress as they pleased, and to conduct commerce and the general affairs of life in the way that they had been accustomed to do while in the enjoyment of their own laws and form of government. This has been more or less the case with all European communities who have established themselves in tropical regions. Their own indolence and disposition for luxury, and the dangers of the climate, have always combined to render them dependent upon the natives of the

country alike for personal service and for a regular supply of the necessaries of life; and hence in most instances, where the latter enjoy any privileges, or are exempted from molestation, they are indebted for both more to the selfishness of their conquerors than to their benevolence or humanity. The Portuguese inhabitants of Goa did not make much external display of wealth, either in the construction of public works of art, or in the pomp of gorgeous equipages. They supported no theatre or opera, or any other description of popular amusement, and seldom went abroad for pleasure, but found their chief entertainment in gaming, and in the festivals of the church, which were celebrated by them with remarkable splendour. Females had but small influence in society, because they were few in number, and because the extreme jealousy of their husbands obliged them to confine their intercourse to persons of their own sex, or to their nearest relations belonging to the other.

A considerable influx of the priesthood took place into Goa shortly after the Portuguese had established themselves there. About the middle of the sixteenth century, the Franciscans, the Dominicans, the Jesuits, and several other religious orders, founded convents, and built those splendid churches for which the settlement was

at one time celebrated. Most of the early clergy were men of learning and piety, and upon them devolved the task of educating the children of the Portuguese residing in India; and colleges were instituted for that purpose, at which the youth enjoyed such favourable opportunities of instruction as are seldom found in a distant colony. But literature and the fine arts have never flourished under the skies of the torrid zone; and they, as may easily be supposed, were little esteemed or cultivated at Goa, where, in addition to the nature of the climate, the condition of the people was hostile to their progress.

Nearly all the Portuguese, except the clergy, being either mercantile speculators, or military adventurers, or aspirants for office, they were too deeply engaged in their respective pursuits to feel any interest in subordinate objects; while the few government functionaries who enjoyed leisure and independence thought only of making the most of their appointments, because they well knew that their tenure of them was uncertain, and that the climate of India was a fatal one to European constitutions. It is evident, too, that the establishment of the Inquisition at Goa, in 1560, must have contributed in no small degree to retard the progress of taste and knowledge there; for that tribunal exercised its functions with so much

strictness, that no books or specimens of the fine arts could be imported without its sanction, while it at the same time kept the opinions of the people under censorship, and was ever on the watch to denounce and punish those individuals who might attempt to introduce new ones, whether in reference to church or state. Father Cottineau in defending the Inquisition of Goa against the charge of undue severity in its proceedings, remarks that it always sincerely desired to save the lives of those who had incurred its displeasure, and that at every auto-de-fe that took place, most of the criminals were reprieved, while those who did suffer death were in general "strangled before they were burned."

About the middle of the seventeenth century, the wealth and power of the Portuguese in the East had prodigiously declined, and the general character of the people had suffered a corresponding and proportionate abasement. The men whom the court of Portugal now appointed to fill the different offices of government in India, were greatly inferior in rank, pretensions, and talents, to their earlier predecessors; and, coming to the country less with a view to personal glory or distinction, than for the purpose of acquiring wealth, they set but an indifferent example to their inferiors and subordinates, and failed to practise those pub-

lic virtues, or exercise that noble energy, which had distinguished the career of many of the founders of the Portuguese dominion in the East. Private individuals naturally began to partake of the avidity and interested spirit of their rulers; and with the more readiness, because they saw that the rapid decay of the Portuguese establishments, which was going forward under their observation, would, ere long, prove fatal to their own prosperity, and close all the avenues to preferment that had hitherto lain open to their ambition. The trade of Goa and Malacca, and other places, being ruined by the competition and intrigues of the Dutch and English, many of the Portuguese merchants were reduced to indigence; while their countrymen of the lower orders, no longer getting employment in the large towns, found it necessary to wander in search of it to distant spots. The establishments were thus gradually depopulated of Europeans; nor was the loss supplied by that annual arrival of adventurers from Portugal which had formerly occurred, for persons of the kind had no longer any encouragement to seek their fortunes in the Indies. This despressed state of things rendered many of the Portuguese hopeless of ever being able to return to their native land; and to console themselves, and to improve their resources, they formed alli-

ances with the Moorish and Malabar women, and adopted their habits and prejudices; and these unions, between two different races of people, occasioned (as they always do) a deterioration of character in both.

The reduced fortunes of the Portuguese did not, however, lower their personal pretensions, or produce amongst them an increase of industry; for all the travellers who visited their Indian settlements at the period in question, speak of their pride, their idleness, and their voluptuous and quarrelsome dispositions. "The men are generally excessive proud," says Baldæus; "there being scarce any of them that thinks himself removed a little above the vulgar sort, but what has his umbrella carried over his head, another servant to carry his cloak after him, and another who holds his sword. They use frequently snuff, not excepting the maidens and women; and as they walk along the streets, they are continually stroking and setting up their whiskers. The women never appear abroad either on foot or in chairs unveiled, their husbands being (and perhaps not without reason) very jealous of them; for which reason, also, they keep them at home in their apartments above stairs, the windows whereof are so contrived that they can look upwards, but not downwards into the streets." The same author

observes, that the men seldom employed themselves in any way, but left the management of their affairs to their slaves; and that, though they were abstemious in drinking, affrays and murders were very common amongst them. Navarette, a Dominican friar, who visited the Coromandel coast in 1649, was equally scandalised by the behaviour of the Portuguese residing in the town of St. Thomas; and he complains that one woman used to go to church attended by several slaves of her own sex perfuming her with sweets from a burning censor. "What follows is worse," continues he; "many told me (would to God it were a lie, and I had not heard it!) that Catholic men were pimps to Catholic women with Mahomedans and Gentiles." He further states, that at a procession in the holy week, the people fought with drawn swords; and that at Travancore one Portuguese killed another, close by the altar, during the performance of mass.

About this period Tavernier, the jewel-merchant, celebrated for his travels in the East, arrived in Goa, and resided there for some time. He found many of its most respectable inhabitants reduced to a state of indigence; and several of them of both sexes, who had formerly enjoyed large incomes, visited him secretly in the evening, for the purpose of demanding alms. The females came

in their palanquins, and remained at the door, while a servant carried in a paper containing a description of their destitute condition, attested by the signature of one of the priests of the city. Those who felt disposed to relieve the fair petitioners either sent their donations, or delivered them in person. In the last case they had an opportunity of conversing with the object of their charity, who would sometimes be prevailed upon to enter the house and partake of a collation. The Portuguese were so jealous of their wives, that if they suspected them of infidelity, they considered it lawful to put them to death, and also to procure the assassination of their paramours. It sometimes happened that individuals were murdered within the churches; and in two instances certain bravoes, who had been hired for the work of death, fired at their intended victims through the church-windows, careless about the injury which they might do to the bystanders. Though the officiating priest was severely wounded upon one of these occasions, the criminals were not prosecuted or proceeded against; and similar outrages were usually allowed to pass unpunished, because persons in power and office were in general implicated in them.

Of late years the power of the Portuguese in India has still farther declined, and of all their

former extensive possessions the settlements of Goa and Damaun now alone remain to them. They have in reality long since ceased to exist in Hindostan as a nation; that population, called Portuguese, which is now found upon the Malabar coast, being a race of mixed descent, possessing very few and very indistinct marks of European extraction. For nearly a century past no European Portuguese have come to India, except those individuals who have been appointed to the situations of viceroy, of bishop, or of commandant of the troops; the subordinate officers of government having always been selected from amongst the reputed descendants of the Portuguese residents of former days. These men are in general of a darker complexion than the Hindoos themselves, and of a very spare habit of body, and they are seldom well-proportioned or good-looking. They are mild in their manners and temperate in their mode of life, and never exhibit either that quarrelsome disposition or that ferocity of mind with which their progenitors have so often been reproached. In Bombay they form a numerous and useful class of the native community. A few of them are merchants; but by far the greater proportion hold subordinate situations in the various government offices, where their services are found to be highly valuable, from their steadiness of

character, and their expertness in keeping accounts. A good many of them gain a livelihood by music, for they are the only class of the native population of India that can be made to understand and practise that art in the European style; and if their performances are seldom above mediocrity, that is to be attributed rather to their want of opportunities of instruction, than to any feebleness of capacity on their own part.

The site of the once celebrated city of Goa is now a depopulated and desert spot, exhibiting in various quarters cathedrals, chapels, and colleges, all of them in a state of decay, and most of them entirely neglected by the descendants of those under whose auspices they were founded. The Portuguese occupy a straggling town in the neighbourhood of the ancient one, which last they rarely visit, except on patronal and festival days, when mass is celebrated in several of its mouldering churches. The commerce of Goa is limited to an inconsiderable coasting trade, and to the annual arrival of one vessel from Europe. Hence the extreme poverty of most of its inhabitants, who used to derive all their resources from mercantile pursuits, and who now languish in idleness and obscurity; for a certain degree of national pride, and also a strong attachment to their birth-place, prevent at least those of the better class from seek-

ing their fortunes elsewhere. But even the Portuguese of the meanest condition prefer Goa to any other part of India; and many of them are in the habit of annually visiting it for a few months, and there spending the sums which they may have been earning during the rest of the year. Happily for its inhabitants, Goa is one of the cheapest places in the world; there a person with an income of sixty or seventy pounds a-year is considered affluent; and sixpence a day is sufficient for the maintenance of an individual of the most respectable class of society.

The British have obtained a greater extent of dominion in India than the Portuguese ever enjoyed; and in tracing the Asiatic history of the two nations, we find the causes of the decay and final ruin of the one explained by the events and principles of policy which have led to the existing power and prosperity of the other. It was not British valour that drove the Portuguese out of India, any more than it was British valour that enabled us to acquire the influence there which we now possess. Had we entered the field in the character of warriors and conquerors as the Portuguese did, we should in all probability have failed in making a single permanent establishment upon the coasts of Hindostan. But, coming at first in small numbers, and under the unimposing

guise of merchants, we had time to obtain such an intimate knowledge of the nature of the country, and of the character of its inhabitants, as enabled us afterwards to employ our strength and resources in the most efficient way whenever any particular point was to be gained. Nor was the economy attending this mode of proceeding one of its least advantages. The Portuguese, from the period of their first establishing themselves in India, had found it necessary to maintain large fleets and garrisons there to protect their commerce and to ensure their dominion by land; and they were continually engaged in expensive wars with the native princes, with whom they in general scorned to employ measures of conciliation, even when the point at issue was of the most trivial nature. This overbearing and military spirit infused itself into most of their officers of government, and the natives, everywhere harassed by their tyranny, were at all times disposed to conspire against them; and the most inconsiderable Portuguese factories required a garrison for their protection from plunder and insult. On the other hand, the British sought to advance their influence in Hindostan by artful policy and prudent negotiation, and in this way they gained advantages at an insignificant expense, which would have cost millions had they been extorted by force of arms.

They had possessed establishments in Hindostan upwards of fifty years at the period when they first commenced hostilities with the natives; while the wars of the Portuguese with the same people began on Vasco de Gama's second arrival on the Malabar coast, two years subsequent to the discovery of a route to India by the Cape of Good Hope.

The advancement of the British interests in India was likewise in no small degree favoured and promoted by the description and character of the individuals who were sent there in an official capacity. The East India Company have from the earliest period of their existence filled up the ranks of their service with men of respectability and education; and it is doubtless to their constant perseverance in this system, and to the exclusion of adventurers from the country, that they owe the extent of dominion which they at present enjoy. The Portuguese home government, though it in general appointed men of talent to fill the higher official situations in India, allowed persons of the lowest grade and worst principles to emigrate to the East, with the view of improving their fortunes; and the outrages and excesses committed by such men not only led to many disturbances, but also degraded the European character in the estimation of the natives, and required the atten-

tion and control of authorities who ought to have been otherwise employed, and who found insubordination and opposition in the very quarter from whence they ought to have derived efficiency and support. Sir Thomas Roe, who was sent by James the First as ambassador to the Great Mogul, addresses some advice to the East India Company on the subject of adventurers, which they have scrupulously followed ever since, and with great advantage to themselves and to the people of Hindostan. "The suffering of volunteers to pass in your fleets (says he) is an extreme incommodity. How to dispose of one here honestly I know not. Assure yourselves that they are either some unruly youths that want ground to sow their humours, or are exposed to be tamed, and may do you and me much prejudice in reputation. I have had a bitter experience of some taken by myself in good-nature. Here is subject to practise all vice upon and no virtue to be learnt."

The East India Company's officers both civil and military having always been chosen from the same class of society in England, and having always derived their salaries and emoluments from the corporate body employing them, and also been responsible to it for their good behaviour and integrity, it is easy to suppose that a great similarity of habits, opinions, and modes of life must

have at all times, and under all circumstances, prevailed amongst them.

The independent adventurer, who visits a foreign country with a view to his own interest or personal gratification, may run a wild career, and proceed according to the dictates of his fancy; but men holding official situations abroad, and subjected to the control of their superiors, naturally regulate their actions and ideas by a certain standard, and abstain from engaging in affairs or speculations which do not lie within the sphere of their duties, but which, by placing them in uncommon circumstances, might lend a novelty and variety to the tenor of their lives calculated to make it worthy of being minutely described. For these reasons, the English residents of India have always preserved their national habits and manners more unaltered than any other class of Europeans who ever had establishments in the country have done. It is also very certain, that the British have maintained a reserve in their intercourse with the Hindoos, which was never adopted by other foreigners, and which proceeds in an equal degree from their strong attachment to their own customs, and from their being totally independent of the natives, and therefore indifferent to their good-will. Were they to derive their incomes from commerce, or agriculture,

or manufactures, instead of being paid regular salaries by government, they would necessarily be brought into much closer contact with the Hindoos than they are at present, when no community of interest exists between the parties, and when the Company's servants are strictly prohibited from carrying on any local transactions of whatever kind the object of which is profit. We are told that Albuquerque, shortly after the establishment of the Portuguese at Goa, caused many of his officers and other Europeans to form alliances by marriage with the native families resident in the place, and that the best effects resulted from that arrangement. It is difficult to understand how such a thing could have been effected. The female parties in these unions were undoubtedly not of a low caste or class, for such persons would not have answered the purpose in view; which was to create a bond of interest and harmony between the Portuguese and the Indians by an honourable mixture of blood, and by the ties of relationship and property. But no man in the least degree acquainted with the feelings which the Hindoos entertain towards foreigners in the present day, will for a moment believe that it would be possible to induce any wealthy and high-caste man amongst the former to give his daughter away in marriage to an European.

Hence it is probable that the native females whom the Portuguese obtained in marriage were Moorish women, and the daughters of those rich Mahomedan merchants who monopolized nearly all the foreign commerce of the Malabar coast at the period at which the Portuguese first visited that part of India.

The British residing in India live very much in the way to which they have been accustomed in their native country; nor has the influence of a warm climate produced any alteration in this respect worth mentioning. As all of them enjoy the prospect of returning home after a greater or less period of service, they consider themselves strangers in India, even after having spent half their lives there; and this habit of mind, conjoined with the frequent change of residence to which they are liable, has a strong tendency to prevent their assimilating themselves to the country and its inhabitants, or forming any local attachment to either. Comparatively few of the Company's servants, whether civil or military, take any delight in studying the history, character, and institutions of the people amongst whom they live; and hundreds of individuals, who have passed a long series of years in Hindostan, possess as little real knowledge of its native inhabitants as the mass of society does in England. I have explained the

cause of this in the preceding section of the work, and will merely remark here, that the ignorance in question is an evil which is likely always to exist, because self-interest has no voice in suggesting its removal.

At the Presidencies of Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay, in each of which there is a large European population, the prevailing style of manners and routine of society resembles that of the cities of Great Britain. But at out-stations, where only a small circle is assembled, the manner of life and the amusements are, as may be supposed, rather destitute of variety. There field sports and gardening employ the leisure time of the gentlemen, while the ladies find resources in music, riding, and in domestic occupations. The sciences are rarely cultivated by Europeans in India; and only a few persons seek enjoyment in literature, which, to please them, must be of the lightest kind. The general tone of society is gay, liberal, and unconstrained, though frequently very languid. As most of the Company's servants enjoy a good deal of leisure time, they have continual intercourse with each other, and thus successfully supply the want of those amusements and sources of interest which their situation may place beyond their reach.

I have already stated that the British in India

retain nearly unaltered their national manners and habits of feeling, and this will sufficiently account for the meagreness of the details which I have presented respecting them. I might indeed describe certain local peculiarities in their mode of life, which the nature of the climate has forced them to adopt; but the subject would be of little interest to the generality of readers, and would include no information illustrative of human character, or more applicable to the condition of any one European nation in India than to that of another. And fervently do I hope that it may never be in my power to describe any class of European residents of Hindostan of a more varied character than the one to which I have now directed the reader's attention; for if the colonization of that country is permitted and encouraged by the British government, and if persons of every kind are allowed to emigrate there and purchase landed property, the consequences will certainly be such as to cause the historian to shudder while engaged in narrating them. The colonization of India is a measure hateful in its character, repugnant to the commonest principles of justice, indefensible upon any ground, real or imaginary, and involving outrage and misery to the Hindoos, and the sure and speedy subversion of the British dominion there.

The Hindoos suffer the residence of Europeans amongst themselves with extreme reluctance even under the restrictions that now attend it. These prohibit any European from becoming a landed proprietor, or taking up his abode in the interior of the country, or even travelling through it, without permission from government. Hence the only individuals of the kind to be found in the provinces of Hindostan, are the civil and military servants of the East India Company, all of whom are confined to certain stations, at which they must always reside, except when their duties may require their temporary presence elsewhere. The stations in question are on an average forty or fifty miles distant from each other; and a great proportion of them do not contain more than the same number of European inhabitants, and many of them not one third that amount. All the intervening tracts of country being totally free from foreign intrusion, their native occupants enjoy all their customs and prejudices without disturbance, and have no cause to know that there are any Europeans in their neighbourhood, except when they may happen to see them travelling from one post to another, or when the collector of the district visits their villages to receive the annual taxes. But it is obvious that this state of things would not continue were colonization to be permitted. Thou-

sands of Europeans would then disperse themselves over the country, settling for life wherever the best lands were to be obtained, and harassing and irritating the Hindoos by their wilfulness, cupidity, and encroachments; and offending their religious feelings by an open disregard of the institutions imposed by caste, and by the Asiatic code of purity and contamination. In vain would the Hindoos seek relief by changing their neighbourhood, for they would find European habitations in every quarter, and the same annoyances wherever they went. Their evils however would not stop here. Let any one consider what decription of people the majority of the colonists would be, and he will find it easy to form an idea of the treatment which the Hindoos might expect to receive at their hands. Would the stubborn, fiery-tempered, and imperious European think himself called upon to pay the smallest regard to the feelings of the timid, gentle, and submissive ryot or Indian peasant? Would the rapacious emigrant, impatient to derive a revenue from the soil, hesitate to force the Hindoo labourer to toil for him without fair remuneration? Would the expatriated profligate curb his passions, and refrain from offering an insult to the modest reserve of the Asiatic women? Would the indolent and unprincipled settler fail to supply

his own wants by plundering the natives of their flocks and implements of agriculture? Would the religious enthusiast fear to profane the pagodas and sacred places, and to disturb the people while performing their rites and ceremonies? Assuredly not. Nothing would serve to check, much less prevent, the commission of the acts of outrage above enumerated, and of a multitude of others, except the prevalence (amongst the colonists) of a state of bodily fear of retaliation, or the maintenance on the part of the government of a widely-extended magistracy and a very efficient and available civil power. Those who are acquainted with the mild, humane, and long-suffering character of the Hindoo, will not require to be informed that the first source of restraint would have no existence; and those who know the difficulty, intricacy, and expense of the local administration of justice in India, will see the obstacles that stand in the way of establishing and securing the latter. The colonization of Hindostan by Europeans would render that country a theatre of discontent, oppression, divided interests, and bloodshed. The concluding scene of the drama of foreign dominion in India is hid by the curtain of futurity, and the reflective mind almost fears to anticipate its character. But let us not hurry the catastrophe, lest we increase its frightfulness;

and by colonizing the country we shall assuredly do both. Let us not presume too far upon the forbearance and submissiveness of the Hindoos, and venture to introduce and permanently diffuse amongst them a race of men whom they would equally dread and detest. Universal and bitter exasperation would quickly follow a measure of the kind, and Nature would sooner or later assert her rights, and most probably seek relief *in a general and indiscriminate massacre of Europeans from one end of the peninsula of Hindostan to the other.*

ARCTIC REGIONS.

THE ARCTIC OCEAN.

It was the fate of the Arctic seas, dangerous and repulsive as their character is, to be sooner and more perfectly explored than any other part of the ocean, at that period when the discovery of America gave a maritime impulse to several of the principal nations of Europe. The desire or expectation of finding a northern passage to India first led navigators into the Polar seas; and shortly afterwards the whale-fishery conducted there fleets of merchant ships annually, and in this way those regions, which had long been considered inaccessible, became in the course of a short time a scene of human enterprise and commercial activity. It still is, and must ever remain, a matter of uncertainty who the individual was who first visited the Arctic Ocean, and discovered the lands situated there; but we have strong reason to believe that the Norwegians were aware of the existence of Greenland at the end of the ninth

century, and that they even attempted to colonize it a few years afterwards.

If we seek for the triumphs of nautical skill and of human genius as displayed in the history of navigation, we must direct our attention to the voyages of Columbus, of Magellan, and of Vasco de Gama; but if we desire to contemplate scenes of maritime intrepidity, perseverance, trying danger, and intolerable hardship, we shall best attain our object by taking a view of the adventures and sufferings of the early explorers of the Arctic Ocean. Here we shall find men embarked in frail and insufficient vessels, exposing themselves not only to the usual perils of a voyage in unknown seas, but also to a rigorous climate, to a collision with floating mountains of ice, to tempestuous weather, and to the risk of imprisonment and a lingering death from the closing up of the frozen barriers through which they seek to penetrate. In no part of the ocean is the danger of advancing so imminent and so disheartening as in the Arctic seas. Every successive iceberg that is seen raising its hoary front is calculated to warn the navigator to retrace his way; every channel of open sea that presents itself in his rear seems to invite him to hasten to a milder clime, while the means of retreating lie within his power; and every lengthening polar night deepens the gloom-

iness of his prospects, and narrows the field of his resources. Such were often the circumstances of Sir Hugh Willoughby, of Hudson, of Barentz, of Davis, of Monck, and of Knight, and others, most of whom eventually perished in the cause of northern discovery; and the narratives of those of them who have left any, abound with the most affecting details, and present men in situations of extraordinary interest and dismaying difficulties. In perusing the voyages of these early navigators, our attention is more engaged by the fortunes and feelings of the individuals concerned, than by the object to which they devoted themselves; but the case is precisely the reverse with respect to the expeditions in the same quarter that have been undertaken in modern times; the precautions taken to ensure the comfort and preservation of those employed in them being so studied and artificial as to deprive their situation of much of its natural character of peril, impressiveness, and uncertainty.

It is probable that ere long the Arctic seas will be entirely deserted by European vessels, and that they will again enjoy during the whole of every year that unbroken solitude which they continued to do until the beginning of the sixteenth century. The inducements which first led navigators to pass the polar circle were, as every

one knows, the hope of discovering a north-west passage to India, and also of collecting ores of gold and silver; and the first object was sometimes even made subservient to the last, as in the instance of the three voyages of Martin Frobisher to the coast of Greenland, undertaken by command of Queen Elizabeth. But it is not likely that any speculator in mines will ever again seek for them in the Arctic regions; while various modern voyages of discovery in the same quarter, having set at rest the question of a north-west passage, we may safely assert that no expedition will in future be attempted on that account. The polar ocean must therefore be henceforth abandoned by the two classes of navigators who were its earliest and most zealous and intrepid explorers. Again, the whale-fishers, who have long frequented the Greenland seas, find that their voyages are daily becoming less profitable and more precarious, owing to the smallness and scarceness of the whales; to the diminished consumption of their oil in consequence of the introduction of coal-gas; and to the commercial rivalry of those men who pursue a similar fishery in the Pacific Ocean and at the Cape of Good Hope. These causes will sooner or later lead to the abandonment of the Arctic one, which is of a far more perilous character than any other, and requires

large and expensive ships to be pursued with advantage and security. I might also add that the assumed increase of ice in the neighbourhood of the pole will operate in driving from thence European seamen, whatever the nature of their speculations may be; but as the reality of that increase is somewhat doubtful, I will not insist upon the consequences which would gradually result were it actually taking place.

The Arctic seas are navigable during June, July, and August only; and, rigorous as their climate always is, they nevertheless present a greater variety of objects than any other part of the ocean, whether lying in a torrid or a temperate zone.

In the solitary polar seas, during their short-lived summer, Nature appears by turns grand, beautiful, and surprising; and ocean and sky exhibit, perhaps within the compass of a single day, as many objects and phenomena as may be expected to occur in the course of a month in the stormless expanse of the Pacific, or upon the turbulent coasts of Europe or of South America. The voyager, on reaching the confines of the Arctic Sea, observes that its surface is more or less covered with small cakes of ice, which, however, are too inconsiderable to retard the progress of the vessel; but having advanced fifty or sixty miles

farther to the northward, he meets with vast level fields of the same substance, some of them several miles in circumference, and varying in thickness from fifteen to twenty feet. Channels of moderate breadth separate these from each other; and the vessel pursues her course through the widest and least obstructed of these, and at length arrives in those regions where mountainous icebergs stand forth in crowds, fronting each other with desolate aspect and stern distinctness. At one time they lie as motionless as a range of hills; but at another, disturbed by winds or by submarine currents, they undergo continual changes of position, and are seen in a variety of lights, which serve to exhibit by turns the peculiarities of their structure and the beauty and curiousness of their forms. The largest of them in general present a broad front rising perpendicularly from the surface of the water, like a rocky precipice, and gradually sloping back to the level of the sea. But others resemble masses of building, or ruined castles, or ships under sail; while not a few shoot forth spires and pinnacles, or consist of a vast tablet of ice resting upon a single and isolated column. Those that have been long exposed to the action of the waves are commonly hollowed out into caverns and chambers of various shapes, or present a reticulated mass, which

transmits light, and shines with all sorts of glorious and evanescent hues. The predominant colour of icebergs is a green, more or less deep, particularly after their surfaces have been washed by the sea; but some of them, being covered with snow or with hoar-frost, are dazzlingly white, or sparkle brightly in the sun; and others, that contain earth and stones, or any kind of extraneous substance, as often happens, are of a dark hue and perfectly opaque. But whatever their colour and form may be, the eye is never weary of contemplating them when a moderate wind sets them in motion; for then they either open into extensive and regular vistas, whose entire length the view can follow without interruption, or they crowd together in masses, and are forced upon the top of one another, till the icy pile attains a fearful magnitude, and falls asunder—or they are driven suddenly into violent collision, and eventually shattered; but when the tumult subsides, and they again separate, they appear under more surprising forms than before, having acquired beauty and renovation from those shocks that seemed only calculated to deface and destroy them.

A peculiar state of the atmosphere existing in the Arctic seas, contributes in an extraordinary degree to vary the scenery there by chang-

ing and disguising the natural appearance of the objects within view, whatever these may be. It depends upon the unequal refraction of the air produced by the excessive coldness of the climate on the one hand, and the meridian warmth of the sun on the other, and is exactly similar to the mirage of hot and temperate regions, except that its effects are incomparably more conspicuous and astonishing. They become most apparent about noon, when ships lying within a few miles of the observer appear either far elevated above the surface of the sea, or with masts separated from the hulls, or with sails and yards greatly lengthened, or shortened, or increased in number; and not unfrequently the entire vessel is seen in an inverted position, the tops of her masts resting upon the sea. Icebergs undergo a similar distortion, and seem to float in the air instead of the ocean, or present to the view pinnacles and chasms which in reality have no existence. But the most admirable thing of all is, that this refraction sometimes brings within the scope of human vision the image of such objects as actually lie far below the horizon, and consequently beyond the utmost range of the eye, though assisted by a powerful telescope. Home's Foreland, a part of the coast of Greenland, three thousand five hundred feet in height, was

once distinctly seen by Scoresby at the distance of a hundred and sixty miles; though in an ordinary state of the atmosphere it would have been totally invisible so far off, unless its elevation had amounted to twelve thousand feet; the effect of refraction being in this instance equal to eight thousand five hundred feet, or to one-fourth of the arch of the distance. On another occasion, in the course of the same season, he saw the inverted image of a ship in the sky, and immediately pronounced it to be one called the Fame, commanded by his father: and this opinion, as was afterwards found, proved correct, though the distance between the two vessels at the time of observation was nearly thirty miles, being about seventeen miles beyond the horizon, and some leagues beyond the limit of direct vision. Nor do the heavenly bodies themselves escape the influence of Arctic refraction; for circles round the sun and moon, and even multiplied images of both planets, often occur, and add splendour to a sky nightly lighted up by the aurora borealis and other electrical phenomena.

The navigation of the Arctic seas is rendered difficult and hazardous not only by icebergs, but also by fogs and strong gales of wind. These last generally come from the north or north-west; and, as they make the ice drift rapidly, ships are

often in danger of being compressed between two enormous masses of it and totally destroyed. Happily, at such times the sea seldom rises high, the icebergs sheltering its surface from the force of the wind; and if it is covered, in addition, with fragments of field-ice, the agitation is still less considerable, and amounts only to a moderate swell. The navigator not unfrequently finds protection from the storm under the lee of an iceberg, to which he moors his vessel, and lies, as it were, in the harbour of a floating island. At other times, mounted on the top-mast, with a telescope in one hand and a speaking-trumpet in the other, he surveys the surrounding sea, and, by commands issued from aloft, guides the ship in her course through such open channels as may present themselves in the half-frozen expanse beneath him. No kind of voyage, not even one of discovery, requires such incessant attention on the part of those engaged in it, as that for the whale-fishing in the Arctic seas. It is a scene of almost continual anxiety, toil, and danger; and the severity of the climate forms the least of the many hardships that are inseparable from it. An individual without experience in the navigation of the polar ocean is apt to consider his situation as very hazardous when he finds himself surrounded by icebergs, and still advancing to the

north, through channels of open water, so narrow as not to afford room for manœuvring the vessel; while, if he looks astern, he observes that all the passages that might have allowed egress in that direction are closed, or rapidly closing. But the Greenland whalers, at least in the early part of the summer, see little danger or ground for uneasiness under circumstances of the kind; and they are seldom so long beset by the ice as to be much delayed in their return southward. Instances of permanent and fatal detention amongst the ice are very rare; and in the few that have occurred, the sufferers have generally been the Dutch, who used to carry on the whale-fishery nearer the Pole than any other nation ever ventured to do. It is well known that animal substances will remain in a state of perfect preservation under ice for a great length of time. The entire carcass of the mastodon, which was discovered upon the frozen shores of Siberia some years ago, must have been there at least several centuries. Is it not possible enough, then, that some adventurous navigators, in advancing far northward, may discover a ship and her crew embedded in a mountain of ice, like insects in a transparent piece of amber? every man retaining the attitude in which he died thirty or forty years before, and every object connected with his former existence continuing without dis-

placement or decay — perhaps even the ashes of the last fire which the last survivor had sat by in his expiring moments! Who would not exert himself to set free these imprisoned corpses? Vain effort! That sun, and that south wind, which would at one time have preserved their lives, now only serve to hasten the progress of mortal corruption. Not one of them, unaltered as they all appear to be, can tell his own tale: and the ice-bound vessel must be ransacked in search of some journal of their sorrows or record of their past history.

The possibility of reaching the North Pole by water has for some time past ceased to be a subject of discussion; and those theorists, who used to contend for the probable existence of an expanse of open sea in that quarter, have been forced by recent nautical researches to abandon their opinion. A comparison of the heights at which eternal snows are found to exist in various parts of the world, between the equator and the arctic circle, fix the curve of perpetual congelation under the former at fifteen thousand feet above the level of the sea, and under the latter at three thousand five hundred. In extending this line in regular progression to the Pole, and calculating its height in proportion to the diminution of temperature that takes place as we approach the

extremity of the earth, we shall find that the curve of perpetual congelation must cut the Pole five or six hundred feet below the surface there, whether it be land or sea; and consequently that eternal frosts must prevail in these regions to the same depth, and render the existence of a space of open water totally impossible, even in the midst of the hottest summer. The interest which these regions have always excited, and the many daring attempts that have been made to visit and explore them, are the result not of our expectation of discovering anything useful or extraordinary there, but of a certain indefinable anxiety to penetrate the mystery that overhangs that great portion of the earth. In dreariness, desolation, and gloom, the North Pole would probably be found to exceed anything that we can conceive; but who would not wish to stand there for a few moments — to descend to the extremity of the pendant world — to observe the revolution of the heavenly bodies from that sublime station, — and in person to interrogate Nature why so large a segment of our planet has been rendered unfit for the use or habitation of man?

Though the Greenland seas have for two hundred years past been frequented by vessels engaged in the whale-fishery, we have derived nearly all our geographical knowledge of them from

other sources. The masters of these ships nearly always follow the same track; and, though good practical seamen, they seldom possess nautical instruments calculated to make accurate observations, and their attention is necessarily directed to other objects. Hence, many of the coasts and islands are laid down upon very uncertain data, and so much the more so, because it is well known that accumulated icebergs have often been mistaken for tracts of land, and placed in the charts as such. Scoresby, in surveying the north-west coast of Greenland, so late as 1822, found part of it to be 820 miles wide of the meridian assigned to it in the charts published for the use of whalers; and the very existence of Baffin's Bay is still considered doubtful by some geographers.

The Arctic Ocean has long been to the natives of Europe a vast repository which annually opens its icy lid and permits the treasures which it encloses to be extracted by those who go in quest of them. Few of the richest mines in the world have yielded such a continuous stream of wealth, or been worked at so little expense, as the northern whale-fishery. It has for upwards of two centuries past been pursued with more or less success by the British, the Dutch, and the Danes, who together have annually, on an average during that time, drawn from the Frozen Ocean the value

of about half a million sterling clear profit, and in many years a great deal more. The Dutch alone captured 32,900 whales in the course of forty-six successive summers, the value of which may be estimated at 25,000,000*l*. The pursuit of the whale-fishery during so many years, by so many different nations, has greatly reduced the cetaceous tribe in number, at least in the Arctic seas; and the whalers are now obliged to penetrate much farther north in search of their prey than they used formerly to do. If we reflect upon the comparative small extent of ocean in which the fishery has hitherto been pursued, the prodigious number of whales that must have been captured since its commencement, the necessarily slow increase of the species, and the great length of time which its individuals require to attain maturity, we shall be astonished to find that it is not now nearly extirpated. The female whale seldom produces more than one at a time, which does not arrive at its full size, it is believed, in less than a century. Nor can we suppose that the northern seas are annually supplied with whales from some mighty and inaccessible depôt near the Pole, where they breed and multiply undisturbed by man, for all the cetaceous tribe require to come frequently to the surface of the water to breathe, and this they could not do in those regions where it unquesti-

onably is covered at all times with an unbroken expanse of ice of immense thickness; and, admitting this, we must suppose that the close of the polar summer, which forces the whalers to quit the Northern Ocean and proceed home, must also drive the whales towards the south, since the latter have as much cause to shun a frozen sea as the former. We have no facts to prove that whales are found in a lower latitude in winter than in summer, but their anatomical structure demands that this should take place; the surface of those parts of the ocean where the fishers pursue and capture them in June, July, and August, being one impenetrable mass of ice during the rest of the year. But we are not likely ever to obtain any accurate information upon this subject, any more than upon another, which relates to a different, but scarcely less important, inhabitant of the Arctic seas.

It will be obvious that I allude to the herring, which is a source of even greater commercial wealth to many European nations than the whale; and the fishery for which has long formed one of the principal nurseries for seamen. The annual migration of a prodigious shoal of these animals from the Northern Ocean, and the manner in which it divides into branches, which severally follow the coasts of America, Europe, and the

British Isles, are circumstances too familiar and too well authenticated to admit of being treated in detail. The whale must be captured not without peril and difficulty in its remote and native haunts; but the herring voluntarily approaches the shores of most countries in the northern hemisphere, and, as it were, offers itself to their inhabitants at an insignificant rate of expense or labour. In numbers this fish exceeds every other whatever, and it is frequently observed advancing in closely-packed columns four or five miles wide, and forty or fifty long, and, it is believed, a thousand or twelve hundred feet in depth; the track of which is shown during the day by the rippling of the sea and at night by its luminousness. Here we have another instance of the inexhaustible and mysterious productiveness of the frozen sea, for it is from its depths that the herrings come; and it is there we may believe that they return when they annually disappear from the more southerly parts of the ocean.

The annual migration of the species affords a striking instance of the range of temperature which it is capable of enduring. It would appear that the generality of fishes confine themselves to certain parallels of latitude, beyond which they cannot exist, or at least are never observed to wander. The shark, the flying-fish, the bonito,

and a variety of others that might be mentioned, occur only within thirty degrees of the equator; while the cod, the salmon, and several species of the whale, are unknown except in temperate and cold regions. But the herring, while in its native seas, lives in a temperature somewhat lower than the freezing point, and annually, in the course of its migration, exposes itself without inconvenience to an increase of heat amounting to fifty degrees; for it proceeds as far southward as the coasts of Carolina, where the ocean, affected by the Florida Gulf stream, has generally a temperature of 80°, or even somewhat more.

The Northern Ocean was during several centuries regarded as the seat of many of the wildest wonders of Nature. Its wintry darkness and tempestuousness strongly excited the gloomy imaginations of the Scandinavians, and led them to people it with monsters and crowd it with prodigies. The Maelstrom whirlpool was believed to attract ships within its vortex with gradually increasing velocity, till they began to whirl round with such violence that the mariners became distracted, and continued so till themselves and their vessel were ingulphed in its raging waves. The fabulous krakken, a fish several miles in circumference, was reported often to raise its back above the surface of the sea like an island, and to erect its antennæ

as high as the mast of the largest ship. A serpent, with a head like a horse and fiery eyes, was described as evolving his vast length upon the sea during periods of calm and sunshine. Mermaids were said to be nightly visible by moonlight upon the rocky shores; and cuttle-fish or polypi of enormous dimensions were supposed to lie in the shallows, ready to stretch forth their arms whenever a boat approached, and snatch from her one of the crew and pull him to the bottom. In these conceptions we find nothing either graceful or sublime. The coarse and uncultivated imagination of the Scandinavians could be moved only by ideas of horror, magnitude, or disagreeableness. The fiction of the Maelstrom is doubtless strongly figurative of the turbulence and indiscriminate fury of the ocean; but that of the krakken and sea-serpent is unmeaning, ineffective, and insipid; and the mermaid is perhaps one of the most unpoetical creations that ever originated in the human fancy. The Nereids of the Greeks and Romans are indeed scarcely more pleasing, and Virgil himself strives in vain to render Scylla and Charybdis either terrible or impressive. Nor has any nation, either civilized or barbarous, with which I am acquainted, been successful in inventing agreeable allegories respecting the sea, or peopling it with creatures of an elegant or imaginative

kind. The Egyptians personified it as an evil and malignant being under the name of Typhon, and several of the nations of West Africa regard it as the seat of punishment for the wicked; but no mythology, ancient or modern, has placed its elysium upon the ocean, or ventured to describe its expanse as a sphere affording enjoyments superior or even equal to what are attainable upon the terrestrial parts of our planet.

GENERAL PHYSICAL CHARACTER OF THE ARCTIC REGIONS.

The coast which the voyager first descries on approaching the Arctic regions by the usual route, is that of the southern extremity of Greenland, formerly called the Land of Desolation, but now, with less appropriateness, named Cape Farewell. As he nears it, the odour of vegetation and the murmuring of the wind amongst forests do not announce the vicinity of land; in vain his eye wanders everywhere in search of human habitations or marks of social industry, and he listens with useless impatience to hear the voices of birds and animals whether wild or domestic. A deep and fearful silence prevails along the desert shores, which rise perpendicularly to the height of two or three hundred feet, and consist of dark-coloured cliffs crowned with a ridge of ice or snow. In many places their outline is broken by deep bays and narrow channels, where the sea lies in a state of undisturbed and glassy stillness. Here a pro-

found and dry valley, with precipitous sides, opens to the coast and stretches far in land—there mountainous icebergs project like buttresses from the rocky heights, and render approach impossible—and in another quarter, clusters of islets lie close to the shore, and partake of its barrenness and its solitude. The interior of the country presents a succession of masses of elevated land, the lower parts of which are cased in ice, or deeply covered with snow. Their summits have in general a peaked or spinous form; and, consisting of dry rock, and being exposed to the wind, they seldom display any frozen envelope, but stand forth in naked asperity.

Nevertheless a sublime serenity belongs to the landscape and softens its horrors. Every object included in it breathes stillness and composure, and Nature seems to have there assumed her most imperturbable aspect. The unpeopled land, the silent shores, the tranquil sea, and the motionless icebergs, form such an harmonious combination, and are so much in consistency with each other, that the spectator views the whole with satisfied and absorbing delight, and even feels that the introduction of animated beings, or of any marks of their agency, would deprive the scene of its originality and impressiveness.

The shores of all the Arctic lands hitherto ex-

plored have a great similarity of character. They are steep, rocky, and very bold, and often rise to a mountainous height close to the sea. They here and there afford a narrow shingly beach, where a landing may be effected; but the icebergs, which in most places lie ranged before them, form a greater obstacle to this than even their general precipitousness does. The interior of Greenland and Spitzbergen, as far as it has been explored, is extremely rugged, and much intersected by ravines and valleys; though in the former country tracts of level ground of considerable extent are not wanting. It would appear that the configuration of Nova Zembla is less elevated and irregular than that of the other Polar regions: however, little reliance can be placed upon our topography of any of them, because of the difficulty there is of distinguishing what is ice and what is land. In West Greenland several spots of ground have been brought under cultivation with partial success; but Spitzbergen and Nova Zembla are almost entirely destitute of soil, and produce only a few mosses, some tufts of scurvy-grass, and a species of dwarf-willow, which does not rise more than four or five inches above the surface. The indigenous plants of Greenland are more numerous; but they are too thinly scattered, and of too low a growth, to affect the general appearance of the country, or even to

be discoverable in its landscapes, whose only features are mountains, rocks, ice, and snow. It is true, that in the middle of the Polar summer rivulets and cataracts sometimes diversify the scene, but their existence is both transitory and uncertain, for a few hours of severe frost is sufficient to enchain their currents, and render them as solid and motionless as the icebergs from which they derived their source.

The scanty vegetation of the Arctic regions, and the total want of trees there, give an astonishing aspect to those vast quantities of drift-wood which cover the eastern shores of Greenland and Spitzbergen, and afford an abundant supply of fuel and of building materials in countries which of themselves produce neither the one nor the other. This floating timber consists principally of firs, larches, and cedars; some of which retain their roots and branches, and appear in a state of freshness, while others have lost their bark, and are decayed and worm-eaten. Every year brings a new supply of these trunks to the coasts above mentioned, and they sometimes accumulate to such a degree as to choke up the mouths of large bays and inlets, and even to form piles of interwoven timber several thousand feet in circumference. Naturalists have long been divided in opinion with respect to the origin of the Arctic drift-

wood; but most of them regard it as the produce of Norway, Siberia, and America, carried northward by the currents of the ocean, and deposited at the edge of the Polar ice, and afterwards distributed in various directions by local and incidental causes. This explanation seems plausible; but it involves the existence of a continual northerly current in the Arctic seas, which is entirely contradicted by daily experience; for in no part of the ocean are the currents more variable and uncertain; and that of the Gulf stream, which has been supposed to convey great quantities of drift-wood into the frozen regions, does not sensibly extend its influence beyond 55° north latitude. And if the Arctic drift-wood comes from the south, how can we account for its never being observed at sea in its progress towards the countries where such quantities of it are always found accumulated?

The theory of Maltebrun upon this subject deserves attention, not more on account of its novelty than its boldness. It is his opinion that a considerable portion of the timber observed in the Polar regions comes from the bottom of the neighbouring seas, where large tracts of forests exist, that have been submerged by some convulsion of Nature, which at a remote period not only changed the climate of the Arctic regions, but

sunk under the waves an entire continent; and that those depôts of dead timber, being in many places exposed to the action of the sea, a part of them is occasionally detached, and rises to the surface and floats there. It appears to me, that the only objection to this theory lies in the state of freshness and preservation in which a great proportion of the Arctic drift-wood is found; for we cannot have any difficulty in believing that extensive forests once existed in the frozen regions, seeing that abundance of fossil timber is now disinterred in Iceland, and in Siberia, and even in Nova Zembla. The inhabitants of all these countries use the drift-wood for fuel, and the Greenland whalers often collect it for the same purpose. But as the submersion of territory supposed by Maltebrun must have occurred at latest more than a thousand years ago, its forests could scarcely continue such a length of time without change or decomposition. Had they lain so long imbedded in mud or sand, they would now be found in a carbonized state; and had they remained exposed to the sea at any considerable depth, they would now prove useless for fuel or anything else, on account of their saturation with salt-water, or, what is more likely, would, from a necessary increase of specific gravity from the same cause, never rise to the surface at all.

Scoresby mentions an instance of a boat having been dragged to the depth of eight or nine hundred feet in the Greenland sea by a whale, and detained under water several hours. On its being at length brought to the surface, it had so completely lost its former buoyancy, that the seamen were obliged to place a boat at each end of it, in order to prevent its sinking from its own weight, and its timbers, when afterwards broken up for fuel, proved quite incombustible. The same writer gives the results of a variety of experiments which he made upon the impregnation of different kinds of wood with sea-water, from whence it appears that all of them acquire such an increase of specific gravity by immersion to the depth of two or three thousand feet, that they entirely lose the property of floating. Perhaps most persons, after reflecting upon this subject, will be inclined to accede partially to the common opinion, and to assign the origin of nearly all the Arctic drift-wood to the rivers of Siberia, whose banks, at least in the southern parts of their course, are covered with trees, great quantities of which are annually uprooted and detached by the floods consequent upon the melting of the snows during summer. This timber having reached the ocean, will be conveyed eastward by the current prevailing between the coasts of Siberia and Nova

Zembla, and will necessarily accumulate upon the eastern shores of Iceland, Greenland, and Jan Mayen's Land—the places where drift-wood is always found in greatest abundance.

The extreme barrenness of the Arctic regions, and their rocky and elevated character, would point them out as likely to be the seat of mines of the precious metals, had not experience taught us that it is in vain to look for these in very high latitudes in any part of the globe. But our ancestors, less instructed, were of a different opinion; and we find that Martin Frobisher, who made three perilous voyages to discover the north-west passage, was commanded by Queen Elizabeth to search for gold ore, and that he actually spent a great deal of time upon the coast of Greenland in that hopeless pursuit; and, not long afterwards, the Dutch were impressed with the idea that a silver mine existed in Nova Zembla, and undertook several expeditions in quest of it. The glittering of marcasite in the first instance, and of talc or mica in the second, was probably the origin of the popular error that once prevailed respecting the riches of these Polar countries, which recent observations have shown to be in reality almost destitute of useful minerals. The ancient eastern opinion, that gold and silver, and gems, are generated by the influence of the sun, derives some

plausibility from the geographical distribution of metals, the precious ones being found in any considerable quantities only within the parallels of latitude thirty north and south, while their mines increase in richness the nearer they lie to the equator. The most northerly region in which silver has ever been found in such quantity as to repay the expense of collecting it is Norway, where the mines of Konsberg once yielded a considerable revenue; and that of Edswold, in the same quarter, has sometimes produced a little gold: but in the few instances in which the precious metals are found within the limits of the temperate or frigid zones, their locality is isolated and confined, while their existence at all in such places seems to be entirely accidental, and, as it were, uncongenial to the soil around them; and yet, by a singular contradiction, gold in minute particles is the most universally diffused of all metals. It has even been asserted that there is no part of the globe where it may not be found in that state; and the researches of modern chemists have detected gold-dust in the leaves and flowers of plants.

The first of these circumstances was, it would appear, well known so early as the beginning of the sixteenth century; for Peter Martyr says, in his Decades of the Ocean, "There is not any river in the world that does not roll gold." But, how-

ever this may be, few things relative to the physical geography of our planet are better determined than the equatorial locality of mines of the precious metals; and supposing, on the other hand, that such were to be found in the Polar regions, even European cupidity would in vain strive to overcome the difficulties of working them in a country where no fuel is procurable except upon the coast, where a night of seven months' duration occurs every year, and where neither roads nor animals could be made available for transport or labour.

In these regions of silence, solitude, and desolation, the more gigantic powers of Nature do not always remain in that state of torpidity which the general aspect of things would seem to indicate. The records of the past, and modern observation, prove that volcanoes have existed in Greenland; and there is strong reason to believe that some of these retain their activity even in the present day. Zeno, a Venetian navigator, who made a voyage of discovery in the Arctic regions in the thirteenth century, mentions his having visited the coast of Greenland, and there observed a convent inhabited by religious men, and heated by pipes conveying boiling water through its various apartments. This was obtained from several hot springs originating in a

volcano in the neighbourhood of the building, and most likely similar in every respect to those now existing near Mount Hecla in Iceland.—Scoresby, in exploring Jan Mayen's Island, situated near the eastern coast of Greenland, discovered a volcanic crater and various indications of recent volcanic action; and at another time saw jets of smoke arising from the earth in the same neighbourhood. How long these Polar burning mountains have been extinct must always remain uncertain; but we may suppose that they became so about the period at which those of Kamtschatka, once so formidable, ceased their eruptions, and that of Hecla lost its activity, or about one hundred and fifty years ago; for volcanoes lying under nearly the same parallels of latitude have generally been observed to act, as it were, in concert, and to feel simultaneously the impulses of Nature, whether the effect of these was to set them in operation or render them quiescent.

Though the Polar regions present a frozen immobility of aspect, their exterior is, nevertheless, liable to greater and more sudden and startling changes of appearance than that of any other country whatever. This arises from the surface being in most places encrusted with ice, either in the form of hillocks, level fields, irregular masses,

or lofty pinnacles, which in summer partly dissolve, or fall asunder, or slide from their places, or are precipitated to the ground. The noise of the disrupting of immense icebergs is often heard by the Polar navigator in the silence of night; and when in the neighbourhood of land, he frequently observes their castellated peaks totter upon their base, and tumble with a fearful crash into the ocean. When a gale of wind has blown a few hours, and raised a high surf, the vast masses of ice which adhere to the rock-bound coast, are quickly undermined by the beating of the sea, and, losing their equilibrium, drop amongst the waves, and are borne away from the shore. Their removal leads to the displacement of other icebergs, which were supported by them, but which now slide forwards and occupy the place of the first; and in this way a total change in the general outline and in the particular features of a long extent of coast may be effected in the course of a few hours. The same thing occurs in the interior of the country, though in a less rapid manner, from the melting of icebergs and their splitting into fragments, and from the disappearance of tracts of snow dissolved by the warmth of the meridian sun. And it is moreover believed that the great icebergs which fill most of the valleys of Greenland and Spitzbergen

throughout their whole extent, have a gradual motion forwards, occasioned by the annual melting of that part of them which abuts towards the open coast, and thus exposes a large surface to the summer rains and winds, and to the action of the sea. This progressive movement is known to occur amongst the glaciers of Switzerland. The greatest of these is the Mer de Glace, in the valley of Chamouni. A block of granite which had accidentally fallen upon its surface from one of the neighbouring Alpine peaks, and had become fixed in the ice, was observed to move a distance of three-quarters of a league in twenty years, or at the rate of a hundred and eighty-eight yards annually. In like manner, it is probable that all the inland glaciers of the Polar regions, however stupendous, undergo a gradual change of position; and this is partly confirmed by human observation, defective and casual as it has necessarily been in a quarter of the globe so little frequented and so inhospitable.

But let us cease to contemplate these scenes of desolation, these frozen solitudes, where Nature neither speaks to our hearts, nor presents to our eyes anything connected with the history of the human species. Their animal inhabitants, peculiar as they are, shall not draw from us even a transient regard. Let us leave the bear and

walrus gambolling upon the ice or basking at midnight in the frigid radiance of the aurora borealis, and allow the silent arctic fox to pursue his lone way amidst the drifting snow; we will dig into the earth, and find not far from its surface treasures dearer to the eye of the philosopher than mines of the precious metals. Iceland and Nova Zembla will afford us specimens of fossil wood, to prove that their bleak and treeless territories were once overshadowed by flourishing forests. Upon the coasts of Siberia, and in the neighbouring islands, we shall disinter heaps of bones belonging to an extinct species of elephant, fitted to live only in warm latitudes; and under the ices of Greenland will be discovered specimens of tropical plants imbedded in the coal formations of that country. By what process of reasoning shall we account for the existence of these astonishing animal and vegetable remains in regions whose climate is at present so totally uncongenial to the natural productions of even the coldest of the temperate zones?

According to Buffon, it is exactly thirty-six thousand years since elephants first began to inhabit the Polar regions. They could not, he thinks, have lived there at an earlier period, because it would have been too hot for them; nor at a much later one, because it would have been too cold.

But they did not long find the Arctic lands a congenial place of abode, for the refrigeration of the substance of our planet producing a progressive diminution of temperature, they were forced to proceed gradually southward, in search of a milder climate; and the continued southerly migration of the species, occasioned by that cause, at length conducted them to the equatorial regions, which are now alone suitable to their constitution. In this way the French philosopher explains how elephants' bones are found diffused in every parallel of latitude between the north pole and the torrid zone. An English modern writer takes a less fanciful view of the subject, and would persuade us that the fossil remains of elephants which we daily discover in northern regions, are the skeletons of those numerous troops of the species which the Mongol conquerors always had in their armies when they marched to subdue foreign nations; and that the bones of a similar kind, which are met with in Arctic lands, are in reality those of walruses and other amphibiæ, natives of the spot. Maupertuis, reasoning upon an inscription in unintelligible characters which he found at Winso, in Lapland, supposes that the Polar regions may at one time have enjoyed a climate similar to what the Equatorial ones now do, but that a change in the position of

the earth's axis having withdrawn them from the direct influence of the sun, they necessarily assumed that sterile, frozen, and desolate character which at present belongs to them, though they still retain under their surface the remains of their former animal and vegetable productions. But no theory respecting the fossil exuviæ of the Arctic regions can be built upon any foundation more substantial than conjecture, and our recent increased knowledge of the subject has only led to increased difficulties in appreciating it.

The whole coast of Siberia is strewed with mammoths' bones; but the Liachoff Islands, lying near to it in the Frozen Ocean, and first discovered and visited by the Cossack Wolstnog in 1776, consist almost entirely of the skeletons of prodigious animals of the elephant and rhinoceros kind, which exist in such quantities that, according to Maltebrun, that part of the earth seems to have been the general cemetery of these inhabitants of a world anterior to our own. "The great territory called New Siberia," says the same author, "which extends to the north of the Strait of Bones, presents also many similar indications of the catastrophes to which our planet have been subjected; and in addition to these the remains of monstrous birds, a kind of remains which are found almost nowhere else. M. Hedenstrom, we are informed,

has brought from thence feathers and claws which must have belonged to birds three or four times as large as our condors ; and he mentions having seen long rows of petrified wood in the shape of square beams."

Bearing in view these facts and various others of a similar description, we shall feel but little disposed to rest satisfied with any of the theories that have hitherto been offered in explanation of the anomalous appearances which abound upon the surface of the globe. It is in vain that some writers assure us that the skeletons found in the Arctic regions belonged to elephants that were drowned in the deluge, and carried thither by currents. It is in vain that they tell us that the entire crust of the globe was dissolved and decomposed by sea-water at the time of the flood, and soon after precipitated into its former state of solidity, with the admixture of shells, plants, and animal exuviæ. It is in vain that they insist that the physical constitution of our planet was always similar to what it is at present, and that its productions in former times were the counterpart of what they now are.

When we contemplate the vast extent of uninhabitable territory at either pole, and contrast its actual state of desolation with the vestiges of abundant animal and vegetable existence which

the Arctic countries exhibit, and which the Antarctic ones would probably do likewise, could they be explored, we are forced to believe that our globe has undergone catastrophes and revolutions greater than could have been produced by any physical agent with which we are acquainted, and therefore necessarily referable to astronomical causes, which must have at some period or other occasioned a change in the earth's position relative to the sun. It would be unnecessary to have recourse to such a supposition, had we the slightest grounds for concluding that the mammoths and other animals above alluded to did not live and die in those places where their bones are now found, or at least in the immediate neighbourhood of them. But their anatomical characters distinctly indicate that they must have existed in a temperate, or even a warm climate; and if, in accordance with this fact, we transfer their place of abode to our present equatorial regions, how shall we account for their skeletons being conveyed in prodigious heaps to the Arctic lands, and deposited there, and there exclusively? On the other hand, let us insist that the Siberian mammoth was fitted to live in the frozen regions, and the question immediately obtrudes itself, why are not they found there now? and what has caused the destruction of the species in countries which

are at present as well calculated for its existence as they ever were? The plants of a tropical aspect lately observed in the coal formations of Greenland, and the fossil wood of Iceland and Nova Zembla, serve to render it almost certain that the Polar regions of both hemispheres must have at one time enjoyed a climate infinitely less rigorous than what they now do; and we are compelled to inquire how this change happened, and whether it was effected by degrees, or in a sudden manner. We shall incline to the former opinion, if we consider the stability of the solar system, and the unchanging routine of the celestial bodies; no sudden alteration in either having come within the range of human observation.

Taking this view of the subject, I think we may suppose that our planet has in reality three kinds of motion, one annual round the sun, another diurnal upon its axis, and a third of an exceedingly slow kind; viz. a revolution at right angles to the ecliptic, the result of which must evidently be to bring every part of the surface of the earth successively under the equator, and to cause every different country to pass through and experience each variety of climate, hot or cold, that we are at present acquainted with. Our globe may, in the lapse of countless ages, have completed this kind of revolution several times; but

it is to be inferred, from the animal and vegetable remains found in the Arctic lands, that it has completed it once at least. At the period, then, at which the Polar regions lay within the temperate or torrid zone, Siberia, Greenland, and Nova Zembla were covered with a luxuriant vegetation, and inhabited by mammoths, rhinoceroses, and gigantic birds, which continued to exist there till these countries began to be withdrawn from the direct influence of the sun, and to approximate to their present relative position to the ecliptic. After some thousands of years, they will again resume for a time their equatorial situation, and similar forms of animal and vegetable life will be repeated upon their surface, and will eventually perish from the same cause that destroyed those species of both, whose exuviæ excite the astonishment and speculation of the philosophers of the present day. This theory enables us to assign to every quarter of the globe the successive enjoyment of an equitable proportion of those advantages which belong to different climates, instead of leaving us to suppose that the Polar regions have always been doomed to darkness and sterility, and unable to conjecture why so large a portion of the earth should remain useless and inaccessible to man.

The climate of the Arctic regions is less rigorous

and insupportable than might be supposed. This is in a great degree owing to the generally calm state of the atmosphere there during a considerable part of the year. In Greenland there is sometimes scarcely any wind for six or seven weeks together; and at these times the meridian sun feels oppressive to an European. Spitzbergen and Nova Zembla are tempestuous during the winter; and the south-west winds in particular blow with excessive fury, and bring heavy falls of snow. In summer, fog soccur almost daily throughout the Polar regions; but in other seasons the atmosphere is extremely clear. Astronomical observations, independent of those requisite for determining the longitude, have never been made in these desolate countries; nor are the skies there, notwithstanding the wintry transparency of the air, favourable for anything of the kind, the corruscations of the aurora borealis obscuring the stars and confusing the vision of the observer. Nevertheless, it would be interesting to ascertain whether the celestial bodies, as seen through a superior telescope, assume an appearance any way different from what they do in Europe, where, even in the severest winters, the density and refractive power of the atmosphere must fall infinitely short of what exists in Spitzbergen and Nova Zembla at the same season of the year.

ABORIGINES OF THE ARCTIC REGIONS.

Of all the aboriginal races of men respecting whom I have yet had occasion to speak, those of the Arctic regions least deserve the attention of the historian or philosopher, because their physical condition has always presented insurmountable obstacles to the developement of their faculties, and to the diffusion of new ideas amongst them. But while we assert this, we must also in justice admit that the Greenlanders, the Esquimaux, and the Samoyeds, are nearly as far advanced in knowledge and civilization as any people well can be under the same circumstances; and that their intellectual deficiencies are a matter of necessity, dependent upon their physical condition, instead of being the result of imperfect organization, or of a natural feebleness of understanding. It seems necessary to make this distinction; for it is a vulgar opinion that the rigours of a Polar climate always prevent the growth and

expansion of the human faculties, and render men rude, obtuse, and uncultivated; and that, on the other hand, the more temperate and fruitful any region is, the more polished and intelligent will its aboriginal inhabitants be found to be. But extreme cold has in reality no unfavourable influence upon the human understanding; and if the people of Polar countries are remarkable for the fewness and poverty of their ideas, it is not because their minds are incapable of embracing a greater number of these, but because the care of providing subsistence, and of protecting themselves from the elements, necessarily engrosses their whole attention, and leaves them no time for anything else. The thoughts of the Greenlander or Esquimaux run solely and exclusively upon whale and seal-fishing; and he is grossly ignorant of all other subjects and occupations. But this does not imply that he is incapable of understanding such, or that he would be unable to extend the range of his mind, were he to be relieved from the daily and absorbing labour of procuring a supply of food for himself and his family. The Greenlander, clothed in oily skins, inhabiting a subterranean squalid hut, and living upon the flesh of sea-monsters, and drinking their blood, though a disgusting object to the eye of taste, is in reality a being well fitted to awaken

in our minds both interest and commiseration; and the dispassionate and philosophical observer of human life will feel more disposed to admire his ingenuity in contriving to exist at all in the region where Providence has placed him, than to dwell upon the narrowness of his ideas, and the offensive character of some of his social habits.

Viewing the extreme barrenness of the Polar regions, and their eternal winter, and the scanty and precarious means of subsistence which they afford, we should naturally suppose that their aboriginal inhabitants must hold the lowest rank in the scale of human existence; but this is so far from being the case, that the physical hardships and privations which they experience seem to quicken their faculties, instead of paralyzing and circumscribing them; and if we wish to see our species in its most barbarous state, we must actually turn our eyes towards some of the finest and most favoured regions of the globe. The Andaman Islands, lying in the Gulf of Bengal, covered with luxuriant vegetation, refreshed by annual rains, and abounding in all kinds of game, contain a race of men who differ from beasts of prey only in being able to speak and to walk erect. They go absolutely naked, live in the hollows of trees, eat raw flesh, and are addicted to cannibalism, and have a horror of strangers of every de-

scription. In the fertile interior of Brazil are found the Puri Indians, who nearly resemble the people just described, except that they do not devour their own species; and the forests of Ceylon, and the jungles of the Mysore, in Southern Hindostan, are inhabited by communities of people totally unacquainted with even the simplest forms of social order or the rudest arts of life. It is difficult to explain how tribes of men, placed in the fruitful and favourable regions above mentioned, should remain immeasurably inferior in intelligence to the natives of the Polar countries, whose time is incessantly devoted to the pursuit of the sea animals upon which they altogether depend for subsistence, and whose snow-covered domains present few objects calculated to excite reflection or awaken curiosity in an uninstructed mind; but the fact serves to show that the rigours of an Arctic climate are not necessarily unfavourable to the developement of the human faculties, and that the mind is not an intellectual thermometer, whose grade and range are regulated and limited by the temperature of the surrounding atmosphere.

The voyages undertaken during the reign of Queen Elizabeth, in search of a north-west or a north-east passage to India, first made us acquainted with the aboriginal inhabitants of the

Arctic regions. Martin Frobisher, in exploring the coasts of Greenland, had frequent intercourse with the natives of that country. Borroughs, passing through Waygatz Straits, found the Samoyeds living in Nova Zembla; while about the same time various merchants visited Lapland by sea and by land, and enjoyed full opportunities of observing its inhabitants. The Esquimaux were not discovered till a later period, and were probably first seen by Baffin, though we possessed no accurate information respecting them previous to the journeys of Hearne and of Mackenzie to the North Pacific Ocean. The Russians began to explore Kamtschatka about the middle of the last century, and soon after invaded and conquered it; and in this way acquired a knowledge of an Arctic race of people whose existence had not previously been known, or even suspected, in Europe. All these nations bear a strong general resemblance to each other in their moral and physical condition and constitution; but still they present some distinguishing shades of character, worthy at least of that casual attention which I fear the generality of readers will even reluctantly bestow upon a subject of such confined and partial interest.

The Laplanders deserve the first rank amongst the Arctic nations, because they excel all the others both in intelligence and in the arts of

social life, small as the advances are which they have made in either of these, except in the neighbourhood of the Gulf of Bothnia, where, being in the habit of meeting the Swedish and Norwegian fur-traders several times a year, they have acquired some knowledge of foreign customs, and also a taste for European manufactures. It is only within the Arctic circle that the Laplander is now to be found in his genuine state. There he leads for the most part a nomade life, driving his flocks of reindeer from place to place, living upon their milk and the wild berries which his country produces, and residing in a tent in summer, and building himself a subterraneous hut for the winter. Low as he ranks in the scale of civilization, he has carried one of the indications of that state to a very high degree of perfection — I mean the domesticating of animals. Not contented with simply subsisting upon the flesh and milk of his reindeer, he trains them to carry burdens and draw a sledge; and in the last case with so much skill, that the animal is guided in his path, and checked or hastened in his speed, merely by a leather thong tied to his horns, and by the voice of his master. The Laplander, during his summer wanderings, seldom enjoys any society but that of his own family; but, to compensate for this, he forms an acquaintance with every

reindeer that belongs to his flock, studies his character and peculiarities of temper, gives him a name, and endeavours to acquire his affection and confidence. In this way he soon ascertains what each animal is best fitted for, and what his value really is; so that when a feast, or the marriage of one of his daughters, or the want of food, demands that he should kill one of his flock, he is enabled to select for that purpose the individual whose loss will be the smallest deprivation to himself.

The Laplander is active in his habits, of a cheerful disposition, and a voluble talker. He loves gaudiness in dress, and attaches a great value to the precious metals, though money is scarcely known to him as a medium of exchange. On obtaining any gold or silver coins, he either adorns his person with them, or secretly buries them, concealing the transaction from even his wife and children; so that, should he die suddenly, or at a distance from home, all knowledge of his treasure perishes with him. The furniture and utensils of the Laplander are, as may be supposed, of the humblest description; his clothes are made of skins, he plays no games of any kind, and has so little idea of music that his songs consist of merely the repetition of three or four words in a howling and lugubrious tone of

voice. He can give no account of his religion, except that he believes in the existence of malignant spirits, and in the magical powers of the priests or sorcerers of his country. The selling of winds to mariners by these impostors is a circumstance too well known to be more than alluded to here; though the practicability of the thing was long believed in the north of Europe, and is still asserted by many of the Norwegian and Icelandic fishermen. The Lapland sorcerers are also much addicted to the practice of divination, in which they employ an instrument called the Runic drum, which consists of a piece of parchment stretched upon a wide hoop, and inscribed with various fantastic characters; a hand like that of a clock turns upon a pivot in the centre of the circle, and the operator affects to be guided in his predictions by observing towards what figure or symbol it may in appearance spontaneously direct itself, its movements being regulated by a loadstone which he secretly slides along the under surface of the parchment.

The Greenlander next claims a transient regard. He is not really inferior in intelligence to the Laplander, though the disadvantages attending his physical condition make him so in appearance. Possessing no flocks or domestic animals, living in an intolerably rigorous cli-

mate, and deriving a precarious subsistence from the sea, his ideas are intensely local; while the grossness of his food and the nature of his apparel render his personal habits coarse and offensive. Nevertheless, he constructs his winter habitation with a degree of art which is to be admired, and upon a plan which, in so far as respects the preservation of heat, could not perhaps be improved upon, at least in a country where the only building materials procurable are stones and snow. In the management of his kajak, or canoe, he shows as much dexterity as the Laplander does in conducting his reindeer and sledge; while he far surpasses him in the variety of arts which he employs in the capturing of game, whether at sea or upon land. Nor does the disposition of the Greenlander partake of that sombreness which might be expected from his mode of life, and the severity of toil which he often undergoes in his seal and whale fishing expeditions. On the contrary, he is gay and sociable, and a great retailer of long stories, of which he himself is in most instances the hero.

One singular custom prevails amongst the Greenlanders, which seems indicative of a state of refinement to which they have in reality no pretensions. When two individuals happen to quarrel, they never think of coming to blows, or of

deciding the matter by single combat, as is commonly done elsewhere, but they fix a time for a trial of skill at raillery. Notice being given of this, the friends of each party assemble at the appointed hour, and seat themselves upon the ground in a circle, placing the hostile pair in the centre of it. He of the two who happens to enjoy the privilege of speaking first, begins to assail his adversary in the form of a harangue, turning him into ridicule in every possible way, setting forth his faults and peculiarities, describing his past follies, and striving to render him an object of contempt and aversion to the auditors and spectators. No sooner has he concluded his discourse, than his opponent commences a similar strain of satire and recrimination; and this mutual war of words is continued alternately until both parties have exhausted their materials for carrying it on. The seniors of the assembly then carefully weigh all that has been spoken on either side, and proclaim victorious the individual who in their opinion has best defended himself, and most effectually assailed and aspersed his opponent. And here the affair is expected to terminate. This sort of amusement is highly relished by the Greenlanders; and both Crantz and Egede affirm that much broad humour, and even wit, is often elicited upon occasions of the kind; and that the au-

ditors are kept in a state of merriment during the whole of the exhibition. The Greenlanders also entertain themselves with feasts and dances, but they have no idea of music, even of the rudest kind. Pretended sorcerers, called Angekoks, abound amongst them, and possess great influence, for they arrogate to themselves the power of visiting heaven and hell, of conversing with the dead, and of controlling the elements. The Greenlanders derive from these men their ideas of religion, which are too frivolous and unsystematic to deserve notice or examination here.

The Samoyeds are a singular race of Arctic people, respecting whom little accurate information has hitherto been obtained. They chiefly inhabit the northern coasts of Russia bordering upon the Frozen Ocean, and are found also in the great island of Nova Zembla; but some writers assert that they never reside there, and only visit it during summer, with the view of collecting furs. The Samoyed has less acquaintance with the arts of life than either the Laplander or the Greenlander. He is diminutive in stature and awkward in his gait, and he clothes himself in the skins of wild beasts; and, rigorous as his climate is, he constructs his habitation without art, and lives almost unsheltered from the inclemencies of

the weather. He subsists chiefly upon seals and foxes, and wanders from place to place with his family in search of a precarious meal; but, notwithstanding the miserableness of his condition, he practises a greater variety of religious rites than any other Arctic people do. He pays adoration to wooden idols, bearing a gross resemblance to the human figure, and offers them bloody sacrifices; and his obedience to his priest is so great, that he follows him wherever he may choose to go, and supplies him with food at all times. The priest acquires this degree of influence by performing incantations, and by pretending to be in habitual communication with the Deity. In Hakluyt's collection of voyages, there is preserved a fragment respecting the Samoyeds, written by one Johnson, who was servant to Richard Chancellor when he visited Russia on an embassy in Queen Elizabeth's reign. It describes at some length the juggling of a Samoyed priest, who, after other feats, appeared to transfix himself with a sword; and the deception must have been well managed, for the narrator felt convinced of its reality, and attributes the whole to supernatural agency. The Samoyeds are numerically perhaps the most inconsiderable nation in the world in proportion to the extent of territory

which they occupy; nor is the little that we do know respecting them calculated to make us desirous of knowing any more.

It is scarcely necessary for me to speak of the Esquimaux, because they are now generally acknowledged to be of the same race as the Greenlanders, whom they closely resemble in every important or interesting particular. The only Arctic nation which remains to be noticed, is that inhabiting Kamtschatka. It is true that the peninsular part of that country lies beyond the Polar circle; but as the climate of a great portion of it is extremely rigorous, and as the physical condition of its inhabitants is similar to what is observed in other frozen regions, a short account of them may properly enough be introduced here.

Kamtschatka was discovered by the Russians in 1746; and the quantity of valuable furs which they observed amongst the natives, led them to attempt the conquest of the country, in order that they might obtain a tribute of peltries from it. The invading force consisted of only a few Cossacks, who met with much more resistance, and encountered many more difficulties, in accomplishing their object than had been expected. The Kamtschatkans shut themselves up in fortified places, and fought desperately in defence of their liberty; and in some instances, when pressed to

the last degree, and forced to abandon their strongholds, they first massacred their wives and children, and then fled and took up a position somewhere else, resolutely continuing on the defensive till overpowered by numbers, and either killed or made prisoners. This kind of warfare was prolonged many years; but the Kamtschatkans perceiving that they were likely to be exterminated by the Russians, and that they had no chance of ever being able to expel them from the country, at length sued for peace, and agreed to pay tribute in peltries. Things were gradually restored to tranquillity, but not till nearly one-third of the entire population of Kamtschatka had perished by war and famine. The Kamtschatkans, like most other Arctic nations, live in tents in summer, and in huts in winter. These latter are nearly subterraneous, their conical roofs alone rising above the surface of the ground; and twenty or thirty of them often stand close together, forming a little village, called an ostrog in the language of the country. Kamtschatka abounds with rivers which furnish salmon and other kinds of fish in vast quantities, and upon these her inhabitants almost exclusively subsist; for their country does not produce the reindeer, or any animal susceptible of domestication except the dog. Him they train to draw a sledge, and to perform long journeys on

the snow, and his services in that way prove as valuable to them as those of the reindeer do to the Laplanders. In summer the Kamtschatkan is actively engaged in fishing; but he passes the greater part of the cold season within doors, in the society of his wife and family, and leads a life of indolence except when he happens to go abroad to hunt sables and ermines. Unlike the inhabitants of any other Arctic region, he occasionally makes use of an intoxicating substance, which possesses, it would appear, even greater powers of excitement than ardent spirits or opium. It is a plant named moucho-more, which grows wild in Kamtschatka, and resembles a mushroom in its external character. The effects of the moucho-more are obtained by chewing small quantities of it at intervals; and should the doses of it be very frequently repeated, the person under their operation grows delirious, and is liable to commit every kind of extravagance, and at length sinks into a trance from which he slowly recovers, unconscious of what he has done, or of what has occurred around him. Happily, the Kamtschatkans are sparing and cautious in the use of the moucho-more, reserving it chiefly for feasts and occasions of rejoicing, which however occur as often as the means of those who are to partake in them will admit; for this people delight much

in showing hospitality to one another, and also to the foreigners who may visit their country, providing these are not Russians. Dobell, the Siberian traveller, mentions a peculiar custom, connected with the present subject, which prevails amongst the Kamtschatkans, and which it seems to me might advantageously be adopted elsewhere. When a host, after having entertained one of his own countrymen for a reasonable length of time, finds that he is not disposed to take his departure, he causes a certain dish, called tolkootha, to be prepared and served up at the next meal. The composition of this dish never varies, though a great variety of articles enter into it; and no sooner does the unwelcome visiter see it placed upon the table, than he perceives that his company has ceased to be agreeable to his entertainer, and that it is expected that he will quit the house without delay; for the tolkootha is never presented under any circumstances whatever except for the purpose of conveying a silent notification to the above effect, nor can the individual to whom this is addressed disregard it without committing an outrage of the laws of hospitality, which would subject him to general contempt and aversion. In the custom just described we find greater delicacy and ingenuity than could be expected amongst a people so uncivilized as the Kamtschatkans, and

it reminds us of the mode in which the Asiatic intimates to his visiter that it is time for him to take leave. He makes him some trifling present, and it then becomes imperative upon the receiver to retire without delay, however insignificant the gift may be, and it seldom amounts to more than a piece of betel-nut, or a few drops of attar of roses.

If, in taking a general view of the Arctic nations, we are struck with the miserableness of their condition, we can at least have the consolation of reflecting that they are absolutely contented with it, and that none of them would exchange it for any other. It is well known that the natives of beautiful and fertile regions have fewer and more feeble local attachments than those of less favoured lands. That love of country, which scarcely belongs to the character of an inhabitant of the Torrid zone, assumes the form of a predominating passion in the neighbourhood of the Arctic circle, and appears in perhaps its greatest possible intensity amidst the snows and ices of the North Pole. Most of the early explorers of the Arctic seas were in the habit of enticing on board their ships some specimens of the different nations that happened to fall in their way, and carrying them home with them. But in no instance was the Greenlander, or Laplander, or Samoyed, found

willing to quit his country, though bribed with presents and delicate food, and caressed and consoled in every possible way; and the captors always found it necessary to use force in detaining their prisoners, who in many cases pined away and died shortly after losing sight of their native land, and in others leaped overboard as soon as they could find an opportunity of doing so. Leems mentions, in his account of Danish Lapland, that when the King of Denmark desired that several natives of that country should be sent to Copenhagen, to be instructed in the arts of civilized life, no Laplander was found willing to comply with his Majesty's proposals, or disposed to expatriate himself upon any terms whatever. About the same time, five Greenlanders, that had been entrapped by the master of a fishing-vessel, were brought to Copenhagen; but though they were treated with the utmost kindness and indulgence, and gratified in all their desires, three of them soon died of grief, and the other two eventually shared a similar fate, after having made several desperate but unsuccessful attempts to return to their native country. On the other hand, it is curious to remark how easy it has always been to persuade the inhabitants of the tropical parts of the earth to quit their native land, whatever degree of fertility and loveliness might

belong to it. Many of the Bahama islanders voluntarily accompanied Columbus during his voyages in the Caribbean seas, and even went with him to Europe. When Hispaniola had become nearly depopulated, in consequence of the excesses and rapacity of the Spaniards, Ovando, who was governor there at the time, sent three ships to the Leucayan archipelago, to procure from thence a supply of labourers for the mines. The person in command of the expedition assured the Leucayans that he had come from a distant country, the happy abode of their ancestors, and that his object was to convey there every individual who felt any desire to visit his deceased parents, friends, or relatives. The inconsiderate Leucayans, simple enough to be imposed upon by this ill-contrived tale, and totally unfettered by any attachment to their native land, hurried in crowds on board the Spanish vessels, which immediately setting sail, carried them to an abode of sorrow, from which not one of their number ever returned. Cook, during his voyages amongst the South Sea islands, found many of the inhabitants willing to accompany him to any other part of the world; and Kotzebue, the Russian navigator, met with various instances of this migratory spirit in the course of the Polynesian discoveries, which he made some years ago in the ship Rurick. Is it the privations and the pre-

cariousness belonging to their mode of life, that make the Arctic nations feel an intense interest in the inhospitable regions which they inhabit; while the natives of tropical countries, obtaining without fatigue or danger all the requisites for subsistence, and having, as it were, little direct communion with their own soil, are less prone to form strong local attachments?

It is scarcely necessary for me to state, that no aboriginal monuments of art exist in the Polar regions. Nor could we expect that nations so unfavourably situated as are the Laplanders, Greenlanders, and Samoyeds, should have constructed any works of the kind, great or small, when we observe that even abundant leisure, a temperate climate, and the command of materials, generally prove insufficient to induce an uncivilized people to bestow their labour in the formation of objects of magnitude or durability. It is true that Maupertuis, the French academician, found a large stone bearing an inscription, or what appeared to be one, near the top of the mountain of Winso, in Lapland; but as the characters engraved upon it, and which he carefully copied, were found to resemble those of no existing alphabet, ancient or modern, he seems inclined to suspect that they must have been formed by nature, or by the capricious hand of some unlettered, being and that

they were without any signification whatever. And in this view of the subject he is probably correct; for accident often produces lines and figures which may easily be mistaken for written signs, particularly if the individual under whose observation they fall happens to be in search of objects of the kind. Humboldt, in his voyage up the Oronoco, saw various characters engraved upon its banks, so alphabetic in their appearance, that he considered them worthy of attention, until the natives of the country informed him that they were the work of their own hands: and Kalm speaks of a pillar of stone, with an inscription, which was reported in his time to exist in the interior of Upper Canada; but we may easily believe that this supposed monument of human art was as much the result of accident as the rock of Winso.

Nor do the Arctic people possess any rational traditions respecting themselves or the history of their ancestors. Records of the kind, however obscure they might be, would prove highly interesting, in so far as they were calculated to inform us whether the Greenlanders and other Polar nations have originally emigrated from more southerly regions, and whether the climate in which they live has ever been less rigorous than it is at present. The current of population having

at all times set from the northward, some extraordinary impulse or singular event must have at one period partially forced it into an opposite direction, and compelled bands of men to penetrate within the Arctic circle, and to exile themselves to regions of lingering darkness and eternal sterility. Are all the nations which I have described, and various other tribes of people, both unknown and unnamed, that reside upon the coasts of the Northern Frozen Ocean, really of European or Asiatic descent? Or are they the decaying and degraded remnants of a numerous race of men that existed in the neighbourhood of the Pole, at a period when Nature wore a different aspect there from what she does in the present day, and when the extensive forests and the gigantic animals whose fossil remains we have discovered in that quarter, overspread and inhabited a soil which now lies encrusted with undissolving ices?

EUROPEAN SOCIETY IN THE ARCTIC REGIONS.

In taking a general view of the condition of European society in the Arctic regions, we shall observe few varieties of character or circumstance, and few instances of the developement of any particular habits of mind, or peculiar propensities, dependent upon the nature of the individual's occupation and mode of life. In short, our attention will be much oftener engaged by the physical than by the moral part of the man; and we will be less curious to know how he feels and thinks, than to inquire in what way he contrives to resist the severities of a Polar climate, to obtain the means of subsistence in a frozen region, to remedy the inconvenience of its annual night, and to make life supportable and even pleasing in a land of gloom, solitude, and eternal ices. And it appears the more necessary that we should take this view of the subject, when we consider that the individuals who have at all times formed the

mass of the European residents of the Arctic regions, have consisted of rude seamen, roving hunters, and uneducated fur-merchants, all of them absorbed by their own pursuits, incapable of accurate observation, and susceptible only of physical enjoyments. Any particulars worthy of record in the history of such men must be external ones, and it is these alone that they themselves are able to communicate, and that lie within our reach and appropriation. How much more varied and agreeable would the picture of European society in Polar countries be, did it comprehend a view of the condition and mode of life of persons of knowledge, refinement, and cultivated taste, who had exiled themselves either from choice or necessity to that part of the globe! We should perhaps in that case perceive the human mind gradually and artfully accommodating itself to repugnant external circumstances, supplying the deficiencies of nature, continually drawing upon its own resources, rendering pain and privation a means of ease and enjoyment — and by a kind of moral alchymy (the only practicable one), altering the quality and properties of things, and softening the fiercest and most stern characters of nature into docility and subservience. The process by which a reasoning and instructed mind adapts itself to the most uncongenial external circumstances, and

the means which the individual employs to counteract and ameliorate any physical evils that may be incidental to his condition or situation, are amongst the most interesting subjects of inquiry that appertain to colonial life; and though in the present instance we shall have an opportunity of observing these things in their humblest aspect only, we may nevertheless expect to find some curious and attractive features in the picture of European Arctic life which I now propose to lay before the reader.

The earliest notices which we possess respecting the Arctic regions are found in the history of a voyage made by Zeno, a Venetian navigator, towards the end of the tenth century. He informs us that he visited the coast of Greenland, and there found a convent of monks, which was heated by means of boiling water, obtained from a neighbouring spring, and conveyed in pipes through every part of the building. This hot spring issued from the bottom of a volcano; and the religious men employed it not only to warm their cells, but also for culinary purposes. Who these monks were, and from whence they had come, Zeno does not explain; and his narrative has been rejected by many writers as entirely fabulous. Every one in perusing it must be struck with the resemblance which the hot spring de-

scribed as existing in Greenland, bears to those of Iceland, situated at the foot of Mount Hecla; and we might conjecture that Zeno had mistaken the latter country for the former, did he not distinctly state that they traded with each other, and that Icelandic ships often visited the ports of Greenland. And it must be admitted that the plan of heating the convent by means of pipes conveying boiling water, implies a higher degree of knowledge and civilization than can possibly have existed in Northern Europe in the tenth century; for Zeno's monks were, we may suppose, emigrants from Denmark or Norway, these nations alone having had any acquaintance with the Arctic countries at that early period. The manufacture of iron pipes would not indeed be difficult to a people who possessed the art of forging armour and making swords and spears; but the elevating of the water, the regulating of its supply, and the conveyance of it in various directions, would demand powers of invention and mechanical dexterity not likely to belong to any body of monks in those days of ignorance and superstition, or at least to be exercised by them in that way in a country where the quantities of drift-wood annually deposited upon the coasts have always afforded an abundant supply of fuel. And here I may be allowed to remark, that it is far from being improbable that

the Greenlandic plan of heating buildings by boiling water (if it really ever was adopted) may ere long be revived in Iceland from necessity.

It appears that a vast accumulation of icebergs is now taking place along the eastern coast of that island, which will soon altogether prevent the approach of those heaps of floating timber upon which the inhabitants have hitherto depended for fuel. Should this happen, they must either burn lichens, or remove to the neighbourhood of Mount Hecla, and employ the waters of the Geyser, and of their other boiling springs, to warm their habitations and dress their food. Then will be seen, for the first time, a volcano diffusing benefits amongst mankind, attracting a population around its base, and regarded by every one as the nurse and fosterer of life, instead of its enemy and wanton destroyer.

The early history of European settlements in the Arctic regions is rather obscure, and what we do know upon the subject is too familiar to the public to admit of its being minutely detailed here. It would appear that, in the eleventh century, an outlawed Norwegian formed a settlement upon the eastern coast of Greenland, and that many of his countrymen, allured by the agreeableness of the place, emigrated thither, bringing along with them cattle, grain, and agri-

cultural implements. The colony soon became populous and flourishing; schools and churches were built, and the arts of life cultivated; while the produce of the whale and seal fisheries enabled the inhabitants to carry on an advantageous trade with Norway, and to obtain from thence European manufactures, and other articles which were not procurable amongst themselves. This kind of commerce employed several ships annually; but after many years it declined, and, from some unknown cause, all intercourse between Norway and Greenland was discontinued about the middle of the fourteenth century. At a subsequent period, the Danes and Norwegians, desirous of renewing their trade with the colony, fitted out several ships for that purpose; but none of these succeeded in reaching their destination, or even obtaining a view of its coasts, for a vast and impenetrable barrier of ice everywhere prevented their advancing within thirty miles of those ports which had formerly been found accessible during three months of every year. Repeated attempts were afterwards made by various nations to regain a knowledge of the imprisoned colony, but all of these failed; and up to the present time we remain totally in the dark respecting the fate and condition of the civilized population of East

Greenland, which has been so mysteriously cut off from all communication with the rest of the world.

An event similar to the above has not occurred in any part of the world with which we are acquainted; and thus destitute of the results of an analogous case, we can only speculate upon the consequences, immediate and remote, which must have accrued to the inhabitants of East Greenland after the icy barrier had closed around their coasts, and excluded them from foreign aid and intercourse. The colony was, from its physical character, less able to bear a total separation from the rest of the globe than perhaps any inhabited spot whatever. Producing very scanty and uncertain crops of grain, and affording pasturage for only a few cattle, the mass of the food consumed by its population was partly imported from Denmark and Norway, and partly obtained from the sea, which afforded a considerable quantity of fish during the summer months. But the supply of provisions derived from both of these sources must have failed at the same time; for that accumulation of ice upon the coast, which prevented the approach of the Norwegian vessels, would also, by covering the surface of the sea, put an end to every kind of fishing, and reduce the colonists to the most desperate circumstances.

It is probable that the glacial involvement of East Greenland was effected in the course of a few days, and about the beginning of the Polar summer. The observations of Arctic navigators prove that a vast disruption of ice takes place towards the Pole once every twenty or twenty-five years, and that the masses are carried more or less to the southward by winds and currents, and continue to block up the seas in an unusual degree, till they gradually disperse and dissolve, and leave the passage for ships as free as it was before. A periodical event of this kind caused, in all likelihood, the imprisoning of the inhabitants of East Greenland. In some tempestuous night in April, when looking forward to the opening of the navigation, and the arrival of the annual fleet from Norway, they would be aroused by a succession of terrific noises; and, stationing themselves on their lofty shores, would see afar off a vast and uninterrupted succession of mountainous icebergs moving from the north in horrid array, and bearing down upon the coast of Greenland. A great proportion of these floating masses would probably pass on to the southward, and encourage the frightened colonists to hope that the rest of them would follow the same route; but the gradual entanglement of the icebergs with one another, and the stoppage in their progress

caused by capes and points of land, and by the in-draught of eddies and local currents, would at length render many of the largest of them stationary, and form the general outline of that frozen barrier which was soon to inclose the colony.

No sooner had the progression of the icebergs ceased in one place, than those following close behind, unable to advance farther in a lateral or horizontal direction, would be forced upwards over the tops of those ranged before them, and a scene of fearful accumulation, collision, and destruction would ensue, and go on increasing so long as additional materials continued to be rolled in from the relentless north. Thus the frozen barrier, having first acquired the utmost possible solidity below, from the violent compression and the wedging together of its different parts, would afterwards attain greater and greater elevation, and at length rise higher than the coasts of Greenland, lofty and precipitous as these are, and extend itself into every bay and inlet, and even encroach upon the land. Then would the colonists begin to feel some misgivings respecting their situation; but so long as the wind continued to blow with any degree of strength, and the least motion was discernible amongst the icebergs, they would indulge a hope of seeing them disperse, perhaps even more

rapidly than they had collected together, and would retire to their houses on the approach of darkness, short as its duration is in Greenland at the beginning of the Polar summer. Revisiting the coast next morning, they would find that the tempest had ceased, and that the ice was motionless, while a serene atmosphere and cloudless sky enabled them to discern an interminable succession of glacial peaks and frosted eminences rising to the northward and eastward; and the profound and melancholy silence reigning in these directions would indicate that Nature was satisfied with what she had done, and that her activity was not likely to be soon again exerted in the same quarter.

The colonists would not altogether despair of the breaking up of the ice till the middle of August, when the power of the sun begins to decline in the Arctic regions. But before the season had advanced so far, they must have experienced two formidable results of their new situation, the total interruption of their fisheries and the want of the drift-wood, which had before annually floated towards their coasts, and afforded their only supply of fuel for the winter. The impossibility of the usual vessels arriving from Norway they would regard as a minor evil, because these brought to the colony merely the conveniences of

life, which cease to be available whenever its necessaries are withdrawn. Anticipations of famine and benumbing cold would now take undivided possession of every mind; and the impulse of self-preservation would set the colonists in array against one another. The hearts of the rich would be steeled to the miseries of the poor, and a desperate struggle would take place in the partition of the fuel and the means of subsistence that existed in the country, and were to form the only resource of its inhabitants throughout at least a Polar winter of eight months' duration, and perhaps for a succession of years, should the ice which blocked up their coasts remain so long undissolved, and they themselves be able to protract their lives for any considerable length of time. In the course of a few months all their firewood and oil would be consumed, and they would be reduced to the necessity of pulling down their habitations to obtain the timber that formed their floors and roofs; and in this way deprived of shelter, they would dig caves in the ground, in imitation of the winter-houses of the native Greenlanders, and linger out their lives in these dark abodes, in the constant companionship of cold and famine. A large proportion of the colonists must have perished in the course of the second year of their imprisonment; and a considerable number would probably attempt to

cross the country and reach West Greenland, but finding the route impassable, (as it has since been ascertained to be,) they would mostly fall victims to the fatigues of the journey. The priests would in all likelihood continue to the last to reside in their churches and convents, of which there were several in the colony ; and it is in the cells or libraries of these that some written memorial or diary of the events of that awful period may yet exist, and hereafter be found by the first navigator who is fortunate enough to effect a landing upon the coast of East Greenland.

Some sanguine speculators have even insisted that this colony may still be in existence, and this opinion has caused them to feel an ardent desire that its site should be visited and explored, in order to ascertain the present condition of the inhabitants ; but we shall rest satisfied that they must all have perished within a few years subsequent to the first season of their imprisonment, if we consider the physical character of Greenland, and reflect upon the immediate and insurmountable privations to which its residents, however inured to the climate, must have been subjected upon the closing of the ice around them. But did the least air of probability attach to the former supposition, it would indeed be an admirable sub-

ject for human enterprise to penetrate to the colony; not so much with a view to gratify our mere curiosity respecting it, as to solve a problem in reference to the mental capabilities of the human race, which is involved in the following question: Can any community in a state of civilization, be it high or low, continue to make progression in that state without foreign aid or intercourse?

It would appear that the Norwegian settlers in East Greenland were tolerably far advanced in the arts of life at the period at which they last had communication with Europe. They had regular forms of government and of religion; they practised agriculture and the more necessary mechanic arts; and they possessed schools and churches, which were served by priests endowed with a moderate portion of the learning of their own times. Supposing, then, that the lost colony is still in existence, and that its inhabitants shortly contrived in some way or other to remedy the evils that first attended their separation from the rest of the world, shall we, on visiting them, find that they have declined, or progressed, or remained stationary, in reference to the state of civilization which they enjoyed at the period of our former acquaintance with them? We may reasonably enough conclude that the first must be the case; because the physical difficulties to which

they would be exposed on the closure of the ice, would absorb their whole attention, and withdraw their minds from the cultivation of learning and the improvement of the arts. But let us imagine that no obstacle of the kind had existed to retard their social advancement; would they in such a case have preserved amongst themselves, up to the present time, all the knowledge that they possessed when they were shut out from Europe; and would they have increased it, and even discovered new channels for the exercise of the human faculties and of human ingenuity?

Nothing but the discovery of some social community that had, after attaining a certain degree of civilization, been entirely cut off from any intercourse with the rest of the world during several centuries, would enable us to determine whether any portion of the human species, however well instructed it may be, can continue to advance in knowledge, and in the arts of life, without incitement and assistance, direct or indirect, from neighbouring countries. We well know that no people ever were able to civilize themselves; and this has always appeared too obvious to admit of denial, even by the vainest nations of antiquity, however unwilling they might be to acknowledge that they owed anything to foreigners. The early annals of nearly all countries, barbarous and en-

lightened, ascribe the first origin of their social state to the arrival amongst them of some stranger from a distant region, who instructed them in the arts of life, and communicated to them a system of religion. Thus the ancient Greeks, boundless as their pretensions were, confess that they received these benefits from an Egyptian. The Egyptians, on the other hand, derived all their *secular* knowledge from a person called Thoth. Odin civilized the Scandinavians; Manca Capac did the same service to the people of Peru; Oran was the benefactor of the Friendly Islands in the Pacific Ocean; and Boodh enlightened the natives of the Eastern archipelago. These instructors of the human race are almost invariably represented to have come from some unknown place; and in many instances we find that they departed on completing the object of their respective missions, and never again showed themselves. And to satisfy ourselves that nations cannot advance in civilization without the aid and stimulus of foreign intercourse, we need only refer to the people of China, Hindostan, and Japan, none of whom have in the least degree progressed in knowledge, or in the arts of life, since we first became acquainted with them; and if we credit their respective annals and traditions, we shall rather come to the conclusion that they have for many centuries back been gra-

dually declining in these respects. No community, therefore, possesses within itself the means of social improvement; this originating almost altogether in the frequency of its external collision with its neighbours, or with the inhabitants of remote parts of the world, whether the agent leading to this be commerce, or war, or national rivalry, or the formation of settlements abroad. The greater sway that cupidity, avarice, discontent, luxury, pride, selfishness, political ambition, and all the other bad passions incidental to human nature, exert amongst any people, the more rapidly will they advance in civilization; which is a state of moral excitement existing in a community precisely similar to that animal one which may be kept up in the human frame by the continued use and repetition of stimulants. It is said that the most innoxious living creature, if subjected to torture for a long period of time, will at length produce poisonous secretions of virulent and destructive qualities; and in the same way, bodies of men, when their minds are kept in a state of irritation by foreign intercourse, and harassed by anxieties and furious passions, and by the desire and necessity of circumventing each other, change their nature, and become the originators of those complicated systems of social life which diffuse poverty, crime, suffering, and sorrow amongst the great mass of

those who adopt them and live under their influence; whilst the few whom wealth or privilege happens to exempt from the general evils, complacently admire the state of things around them, and dilate upon the blessings and advantages of a high degree of civilization. Had East Greenland been a fertile country, and capable of subsisting upon her own resources, her separation from the rest of the world by the closure of the ice would have been the happiest event in her history; because she was in this way protected from the evils of foreign intrusion and social refinement, and from the machinations of those self-styled philanthropists, and religious and political reformers, whom Europe has produced in such numbers within these few centuries past, and who have in general spent their idle hours in contriving how they could best sow dissension between their fellow-creatures, and infuse into them the desire of persecuting and torturing all of the human species that refused to applaud their own ineffective reveries, or coincide in their fantastic and untenable opinions. Should the colony of East Greenland hereafter be found in existence, its first European visiter will assuredly not discover there any overgrown church establishment, the majority of its ministers indifferent to the interests of the religion which they profess to teach, and thus

forcing the virtuous part of the people to seek moral consistency in sectarianism, and affording the depraved and licentious a plausible pretext for infidelity, and for a sceptical distrust of received doctrines. Neither will he discover there a set of men who consider knowledge and education as more essential to the poor than food and clothing, and who insist that even those individuals who obtain a precarious subsistence by manual labour, ought to cultivate the sciences, and devote the scanty leisure which their daily toil allows them to religious and political speculations. Neither will he find there a class of people who affect to be the personification of benevolence and philanthropy; but who, though surrounded by every form of human wretchedness, regard the whole with indifference, because the sufferers are their own countrymen, and expend their sympathy and their money upon far distant and almost unknown nations, who contemn the gifts which they send, and too often have reason to denounce the bearers of these as the authors of social dissension, and the disturbers of their tranquillity. No such morbid excrescences would be found in a colony which had been shut out from the rest of the globe for several centuries, and which had at the period of its imprisonment attained a knowledge of those arts of life only that can exist amongst a people,

and be cultivated by them, without deteriorating their character or destroying their happiness.

Nearly all the Europeans who have resided in the Polar regions in more modern times have belonged to the lowest classes of society, and have gone or been sent there for the purpose of collecting furs, or of facilitating the whale-fishery carried on during the summer season by the shipping of their respective nations. The Dutch first conceived the idea of forming establishments in the remoter Arctic countries, and ventured to believe that the human constitution might possibly withstand the rigours of their long and severe winter; nor would it appear that they found much difficulty in occasionally persuading their seamen to try the experiment, even after it had in many instances been attended with fatal results. It is very certain that the first four or five attempts made by the Dutch and Russians to winter in Greenland and Nova Zembla were altogether unsuccessful, most of the individuals engaged in them having perished in the course of six or eight months from cold and scurvy. But these men were in reality very unfit subjects for the purpose which they had in view; for though their constitutions might be strong and capable of enduring great hardships and privations, they themselves, owing to their ignorance and to the grossness of

their habits, must have neglected to live with the requisite degree of regularity and circumspection, and to use proper means of preservation from the effects of the climate. Being seamen, they would seek relief from the benumbing cold in drinking spirituous liquors, with which they were always supplied, and would pass the greater part of their time in sleep, instead of equalizing the circulation by regular and long-continued exercise. Persons of education, refined habits, and discernment, would be much less likely to fall victims to a Polar winter, or even to suffer much inconvenience from it, than men of the class which I have just described; for, in addition to the art of managing their own constitutions, and gradually acclimatizing themselves, they would possess mental resources calculated to relieve the monotony of life in a frozen region, and to withdraw their thoughts from the physical disadvantages of their condition.

It is usual for the persons who propose to winter in the remoter Polar regions, such as Spitzbergen and Nova Zembla, to bring along with them a wooden house in pieces, or at least the materials for constructing one. A stone building would afford much better protection from the severity of the climate; but it is impossible to construct anything of the kind in coun-

tries where the soil is always frozen, and where the rocks and strata, being covered with deep layers of ice and snow, are scarcely accessible to human labour. The Arctic habitation, in general, consists of only two apartments, one of which answers the purpose of a storeroom for provisions; the other, which is used as a kitchen, hall, and bedchamber, combined, has in its centre a large stove of a construction suitable for cooking, and surrounded with benches; and a wooden platform, raised about a foot and a half above the level of the floor, and about three feet in breadth, extends along the walls of the apartment; and it is upon this that the parties sleep every night, and perhaps sit or recline during part of the day. The purpose of the platform is to protect them from damp, and to admit of their frequently moving and airing their beds, so that the hoar-frost produced by the condensation of the breath may not accumulate and cause annoyance. The door of the apartment is made very small and tight, as well as its window, which is not so much intended to admit light (that being furnished by a lamp suspended from the ceiling), as to enable the inmates to ascertain the state of the weather without going outside. A large supply of fuel (generally Polar drift-wood) is placed in the immediate neighbourhood of the house; and every

other requisite article is so arranged that it can be procured with the least possible exertion.

These domestic arrangements being completed, every individual of the wintering party has a particular household duty assigned to him, whether it be the care and apportioning of the provisions, or the management of the fire and kitchen, or the repairing and keeping in order of the building. The collecting of furs being the object of people in this situation, they daily set traps for foxes and such other animals as they may wish to capture. They visit these snares at particular times, carry home the produce, and there employ themselves in preserving the skins obtained in this way. Such is the sum and the unvarying routine of their occupations from the period of their establishing themselves in the Polar regions till the arrival of summer puts an end to hunting, and admits of their returning homewards, should they feel so inclined. During the greater part of their solitary exile, they do not enjoy the variety of day and night, and scarcely even that of different degrees of darkness; and any circumstance, insignificant as it must necessarily be, that ever occurs to break the usual tenor of their lives, is always of a disagreeable and depressing character. Sometimes a gale of wind, attended with thick showers of snow, will rage with in-

expressible fury for several days together, and prevent their visiting their fox-traps, or even quitting the house, in which they are obliged to remain crowded together around their stove, shuddering with cold, and terrified lest the tempest should overthrow the fragile walls which but indifferently protect them from its violence. These high winds blow mostly from the south-west; and such is their sharpness, that no human constitution can bear exposure to them for any length of time; nor is it possible to move from one place to another while they prevail, however short the distance may be; for then the snow both descends in dense showers from above and is whirled aloft in wreaths from the ground, and the atmosphere becomes so obscured that even large objects are scarcely distinguishable at the distance of two or three yards. Storms of this kind are usually succeeded by calm and clear weather, when the hunters release themselves from imprisonment by digging away the snow which has drifted in large quantities around their habitation, and hasten to inspect their fox-traps, which they most probably find to have been plundered by white bears, or to be buried to an inaccessible depth in the snow. Sometimes, while they are engaged in this way, it will happen that one of

them, having separated from his companions, will fall into a deep cleft in the ice, and be unable to extricate himself from thence by his own exertions, the others being too far off to hear his cries for assistance. When, on their return home, they perceive that he is missing, they proceed in search of him with torches; but, perhaps, following a wrong direction, they never approach the place where he lies, or arrive there too late, and find him frozen to death or expiring from cold. Nor are the hunters altogether free from the attacks of external enemies; for several white bears will sometimes appear in the neighbourhood of the house, and remain there many days together, watching the motions of its inmates, and pursuing and attacking any one who may venture to walk out alone and unarmed. These animals sometimes become so ferocious and bold, that they mount upon the roof of the building while the hunters are asleep, and scrape with their paws, and endeavour to force the planks asunder; nor dare the people, though awakened by the noise, go outside to drive away their assailants, lest these should spring down upon them and destroy them.

The hunters chiefly depend for a supply of food upon the provisions which they have brought along with them. These consist for the most part

of rye-flour, salted pork, biscuit, sour krout, and spirituous liquors, articles of diet which evidently are selected less on account of their healthiness, than because of the facility with which they may be transported from one place to another. The hunters, however, often vary their fare with the flesh of foxes and of bears, which is considered by them to be both agreeable and nutritious. But all the care that they can employ in the preservation of their health, seldom enables any of them to get through the winter without suffering from scorbutic attacks more or less severe. The uniformity of their diet, the want of vegetables, their long confinement within doors, and their habitual indolence, produce a disposition to this disease, which is the most afflicting one that can assail people in their circumstances; for it equally enfeebles the mind and the body of the patient, who becomes languid, desponding, and averse to exertion, and at length torpid and regardless of himself and of others, and strongly disinclined to use those common means of relief that lie within his reach, even though he may have a firm belief in their efficacy. And those hunters who escape the scurvy are exposed to other affections scarcely less disagreeable, being tormented with pains in their limbs, and entirely losing their appetite, particularly towards the end of the winter. They

likewise complain that the continual burning of whale oil in their habitations causes some acrid impregnation of the atmosphere, which injures their organs of taste, and renders all their food bitter to the palate, and deficient in zest and in characteristic flavour.

But the above picture of the inconveniences to which Europeans are subjected while resident in the Polar regions, would lose its correctness, were human art to be employed in ameliorating and remedying the peculiarities of the climate and soil there. The hunters, whose mode of life I have just described, being poor and destitute of resources, necessarily submit to various privations and hardships; but these do not inseparably belong to an abode in the country in question, the remotest and most frigid parts of which might be rendered sufficiently agreeable to any class of society whatever. At present, it is useless to inquire how we could best accomplish this, because there is little probability of Spitzbergen or Nova Zembla becoming the seat of an European population great or small. Nothing but the discovery of a gold or silver mine in either of these regions would lead to their being colonized, and afford to the world an exhibition of what civilized men can accomplish when they form a league against the powers and course of Nature, and are determined

to intrude themselves into her most sterile and repulsive domains. When an European settlement is seen standing amidst the Arctic ices; when the smoke of artificial fires blackens the snowy ridges of Spitzbergen; when the Polar solitude is broken by the clank of hammers and the jarring of human voices; and when engines are employed to burst open the frozen covering that conceals the soil, we shall be able to explore the northern extremity of the globe, and to obtain an exact knowledge of those animal forms which exist there, and of which we have at present only an indefinite idea. The existence of a considerable city upon the steep and sterile mountain of Potosi, in South America, is in reality a more startling anomaly than a similar object would be in Spitzbergen or in Nova Zembla; for though these two regions far exceed the former in the severity of their climate, they do not more than equal it in the unfruitfulness of their soil, while they enjoy the advantage of being accessible by water during one-fourth of every year, which would enable them to obtain through that channel those supplies of everything requisite for human subsistence which in the other case are necessarily conveyed by an overland route.

But the probable physical condition of a colony like the one just supposed, is a less curious subject

of speculation than what its moral one would be. When we reflect how much the characters of men are modified by the climate in which they live, by the nature of the objects which surround them, and by the pursuits in which they engage or observe others engaged, we shall find it difficult to determine what particular modes of thinking would be produced by that state of external negation which belongs to the Polar regions, and of which they could at best be but partially divested by the utmost exertions of human art and labour. The colonists would there have a country entirely destitute of vegetation; uniform in colour and aspect at all seasons; unenlivened by animals, wild or domestic; possessing no springs, rivulets, or lakes; unvisited by the vicissitudes of day and night; yielding nothing for their subsistence; unsuited for locomotion or for travelling; and placed in a climate demanding by its rigour, that all the arts, pleasures, and occupations of life should be pursued within doors.

Here then would be an absolute want of most of those scenes, employments, objects, and circumstances, which have so great influence in modifying the human character, and which add so much more or less directly to human happiness, and to the interest of human life. What a vast proportion of the practical knowledge in daily use

amongst the civilized inhabitants of temperate climates would be valueless and unintelligible to our supposed Polar community, however highly instructed they might be! How little of the poetry of life, and how few of the refinements of imagination, would accord with their sympathies, or appear to them to be founded upon nature and mortal experience! The first European colonists would indeed always retain a key to these mysteries, and continue more or less susceptible of their influence, owing to the recollections which they would preserve of their native land; but they would be unable to communicate these sensations to their children, born and reared in the Polar regions; and the latter, guided by personal experience, would refuse to believe that the world contained anything but frozen lands, and communities of manufacturers, from whom were obtained those necessaries of life which were annually imported for their use and subsistence.

The only European colony that has been founded those Polar regions, since the Norwegians settled in East Greenland, is one formed by the Moravian missionaries upon the southern and western coast of the same country, in the year 1756, and since subdivided into various minor establishments and stations. It is scarcely necessary to mention that the object of the Moravians

was to convert the natives to Christianity; and the degree of courage which they evinced in this undertaking can be duly estimated and appreciated by those only who are well acquainted with the horrors of a Polar country and climate. It would appear that the scheme originated in two young men belonging to the fraternity of Hernhutters, who had individually at different times felt a strong desire to proceed on a mission to Greenland, and who, on discovering that their sentiments upon this point mutually corresponded, grew still warmer in the cause, and laid their views before their superiors, declaring that they felt that they had been called to the task which they aspired to execute. If calls are really ever given from above, the one in question certainly came from that quarter, for unlike most of those that we hear of in modern times, an obedience to it brought no temporal advantage to the individuals who professed to have received it; but, on the contrary, demanded that they should expose themselves to incalculable privations and dangers. After many delays and difficulties, the two missionaries accomplished their wishes, and set sail for Greenland, and, on landing there, commenced a career of extraordinary toil and almost hopeless exertion. At first, unprovided with a suitable dwelling, and destitute of those conveniencies

and personal comforts which the rigours of the climate rendered necessary for an European constitution, they suffered great misery from cold, and from exposure to tempestuous weather. Nor were they better provided in respect to food, for they had brought but a small supply of provisions along with them, and they could not at first in any degree reconcile themselves to the disgusting diet of the natives. The offensive habits of the latter, and in particular their neglect of cleanliness, formed additional causes of annoyance to the missionaries; and the whole was aggravated by the dulness of apprehension of the Greenlanders, by the difficult structure of their language, and by the ridicule and derision with which they usually assailed their instructors when they endeavoured to explain to them the principles of the Christian religion. Nevertheless, the Moravians persevered in their labours, and after some time they were joined by other members of the fraternity, and also received from Norway the materials for a dwelling-house, and various supplies of provisions and of articles of clothing. In the course of years they contrived to build a church and a school-house, and also to form a grammar and vocabulary of the Greenlandic language, for the use of those missionaries who might at any future period join them from

Europe. A sheltered and favourable spot, situated at the head of an inlet of the sea, upon the west side of Greenland, was selected for the head-quarters of the mission, which it still continues to be, though many subordinate stations have been established in other parts of the coast.

If the success of the Moravians in converting the Greenlanders has not hitherto borne any proportion to the zeal which they have evinced in the cause, and to the severe privations which they have endured for its sake, we must at least admit that the former have derived many temporal benefits from the residence of these religious men amongst them, and that no evils, either immediate or remote, have attended their labours. The missionaries found that the Greenlanders were annually liable to suffer from famine, not because their country did not afford sufficient supplies of food, at least at certain seasons of the year, but because their natural improvidence, and their wandering habits of life, did not allow them to collect and lay up stores of the kind for their winter consumption. By inducing them to remain settled in one place, and to calculate their future wants, the missionaries have rendered famine a comparatively rare occurrence amongst their converts, and even amongst the natives in general; and an increase of happiness and of po-

pulation has everywhere been the result; while an acquaintance with the minor arts of social life, derived from the same source, has placed within their reach and comprehension several enjoyments which formerly were unknown to them. Nor has the interference of the missionaries with the habits and the religious belief of the Greenlanders ever been productive of those civil and domestic dissensions, and of that discordance of views and opinions, that too often disturb the tranquillity of those uncivilized countries where the doctrines of Christianity have been received by a part of the inhabitants only, and where mutual hatred and persecution, and perhaps even wars and massacres, arise from the existence of two opposing systems of religion. When this occurs, the missionary cannot well avoid taking an active part in the scene of hostility, in order alike to encourage his converts to maintain the faith, and to prove the strength of his attachment to it and to themselves; and, however enduring and pacifically inclined he may be, he will find it necessary to allow them to use force in repelling aggression, and a state of warfare will thus unavoidably ensue, and elicit those sanguinary passions and that intolerant spirit which have never yet in any instance produced results beneficial to mankind,

even though idolatry itself may have been destroyed by their operation and influence.

The Greenlanders, living in small and detached communities, indifferent to any particular opinions, and submitting to no kind of arbitrary power, found little difficulty in acquiescing in the doctrines taught by the Moravians, because these were neither calculated to disorganize their social system, nor to startle their prejudices, nor to overthrow an established form of government. But the quiet and gentle demeanour of the Hernhutters, and their sparing use of declamation while engaged in their religious duties, are qualities which, doubtless, had a strong influence in bringing about the conversion of the Greenlanders, who are naturally impatient of reproach and excitement. The Moravian is the most pacific and quiescent of all other missionaries, whether Protestant or Catholic; and hence he will be esteemed and accredited in countries where religious instructors of a different character and deportment, though equally worthy and zealous, would be regarded with irritation and dislike. No individual missionary, of whatever denomination, possesses qualities that are calculated to be effective in every sphere of duty, though this consideration is seldom acted upon or attended to

by the Evangelical societies of modern times; and hence the general ill-success of the agents whom they send abroad to diffuse the Christian religion, and the frequent unsuitableness of their temper, talents, and disposition, to the nature of the fields in which they are directed to pursue their labours. In attempting the conversion of different races of people, it will be necessary to employ teachers of different characters. Some savages are to be moved only by energetic manners, high pretensions, and a commanding deportment; others are best affected by conciliating arts, and by an assumed though temporary acquiescence in their prejudices; a third class must be allowed the privilege of refusing to believe what they do not comprehend; and a fourth community will reject religious instruction if it is not combined with amusement, and rendered fascinating to the imagination. This principle of adapting missionary character to existing circumstances was acted upon by the Jesuits to its fullest extent; and in no other way can we account for the numerous conversions which they effected, and for their extraordinary success in attracting and retaining large bodies of people around them.

In pursuing the subject of European life in the Polar regions, I might describe the condition of

the Promusklenicks of Kamtschatka, a class of people whom the Russian American Fur Company has sent to colonize that country and to collect peltries, and which consists chiefly of men whom roving dispositions and dissipated habits render useless or troublesome members of society at home. I might also enter into details respecting the sable-hunters of Siberia, who pass the winter in traversing the forests and snowy wastes of that dreary region, and are tasked by their employers to bring home a certain quantity of furs in the spring. I might next speak of the Danish and English merchants residing upon several of the rocky islands in the neighbourhood of the North Cape of Europe, and conducting the fisheries there, and trafficking with the Laplanders. But in doing all this, I should only be able to present the reader with pictures of isolated human life, possessing little variety in their respective features, and affording no moral results worthy of examination, or calculated to add in the smallest degree to our knowledge of human character. It will be better, therefore, that I should not minutely explore the barren and unattractive field of social life in the Polar regions, but rather make some remarks upon the moral influence which frigid climates appear to exert upon the domestic character and manners of our species.

The process of seeking to form a just and an extended estimate of the general dispositions of the inhabitants of the Arctic regions will enable us to perceive that they have in reality two distinct characters—a social and a contemplative one; and unless we keep this in recollection, we shall find it difficult to explain many of their habits and attributes, and be disposed to regard these as inconsistent with each other. A foreigner, desirous of obtaining an abstract notion of the turn of mind and favourite trains of thought of the less civilized northern nations, would probably study with that view the earlier specimens of Scandinavian literature, such as the Voluspa, the Edda Sæmundr, the Poems of Ossian, and the Sagas of Iceland; and an acquaintance with these productions, unassisted by any personal knowledge of the people to whom they relate, would make him conclude that the latter were a melancholy, unsociable, and superstitious race, insensible to all the lighter kinds of human enjoyments, and that neither their climate nor their souls ever experienced one gleam of sunshine. The Edda Sæmundr abounds with fantastic horrors and gloomy reveries; the Voluspa unfolds a system of depressing and terrific mythology; the writings of Ossian present only the darker scenes of human life; the Sagas are mostly grave histories; and the poems of the

Norwegians record nothing but outrages and battles and misfortunes. The geniuses of the north seem to be conversant with none but the most lugubrious aspects of nature and of human life, or at least to feel reluctant to describe or imagine any other. Even rural and pastoral scenes, as represented by them, are destitute of cheerfulness and tranquillity. Their shepherds, whilst wandering among the mountains, are visited and disturbed by the spectres of individuals with whom they have never had any concern, or decoyed and drowned by malignant demons; and even the wild animals feel the influence of these supernatural visitants, and start and tremble as often as they appear in their neighbourhood.

Thus the contemplative character of northern nations is gloomy, reflective, and desponding; but their social and domestic one wears an entirely different aspect, and is quite subversive of those theories which hold forth that cold, cloudy, and uncertain climates are unfavourable to cheerfulness of temper and gaiety of disposition. The truth is, that the genuine and animating spirit of social life is alone to be found amongst the inhabitants of the regions bordering upon the Polar circle, and that in those countries where the skies are ever serene, and which enjoy daily sunshine and a perennial verdure, the people have very

little real hilarity of disposition or taste for convivial pleasures. The Turks, the Hindoos, and the Chinese, and all other natives of tropical climates, are reserved, phlegmatic, and solitary in their domestic character, and averse to having much intercourse with their fellow-beings; and the same thing is observable, though in a less degree, in the south of Europe, particularly as respects the Italians, the Spaniards, and the Portuguese. But though the dreary climate of the Arctic regions, and the sombre aspect which Nature generally wears there, impart a melancholy tone to the reflective philosophy of their inhabitants, still they are the very causes which render them lovers of social gaiety.

The native of the tropics, or the resident of any favoured and genial climate, may loiter away his days in the open air in rural pursuits or in contemplative ease, and may nightly walk abroad to enjoy the serenity and splendour of the unclouded heavens. But the inhabitant of a northern land, driven home by the blast roaring amongst his hills, and by the gloom and darkness of his winter evenings, passes his hours beside the fire, and assembles there a circle of companions, and abandons himself to the pleasures of social intercourse and animating conversation. The sombre reflections which his turbulent climate may have inspired,

vanish away ; he invents images of a lively and striking character, and stimulates his imagination with wine, and cultivates all those affections and those habits of thought that are calculated to lend interest and brilliancy to that system of artificial life which is alone congenial to the country in which he resides. An extended spirit of hospitality, a desire to please others, and a cheerful and excitable disposition, result from this style of domestic enjoyment, and confer upon the inhabitant of the Arctic regions more liveliness of temper, and greater activity of mind, than are ever possessed by the Asiatic or by the southern European. In none of the various heavens which we find described in the mythologies of tropical nations is the happiness of the just represented to consist in social pleasures, or even to have any connexion with these. Mahommed, though minute in his description of the rewards which will appertain to the faithful after death, never mentions whether conversation and conviviality are cultivated and enjoyed in Elysium ; for whatever might have been his own opinion upon this subject, he was well aware that a notion of the kind would be uncongenial to the reserved disposition of the Turks and Asiatics. On the other hand, Odin shows an equal knowledge of the Scandinavian character, when he announces in his mythology,

that the spirits of the blessed nightly assemble round a table, and indulge in convivial pleasures, and circulate the wine cup, till morning demands that they should cease their libations, and hasten to a different field of enjoyment.

But, in maintaining that a spirit of sociality is one of the principal features of the domestic character of the Arctic nations, I do not mean to assert that they exhibit it under a refined or cultivated form, or in companionship with that intelligence upon which a great part of its attractiveness depends. Their circumstances and condition, and their rude mode of life, render this impossible, and therefore the quality of which I am speaking assumes amongst them the forms of hospitality and of a love of convivial pleasures. Hence the inhabitants of Denmark, of Norway, of Iceland, and of Swedish Lapland, are in the habit of travelling great distances during the winter, in sledges drawn by reindeer, solely for the purpose of visiting each other. No sooner has a party of this kind assembled together than the punch-bowl is introduced, and the glasses are kept in continual circulation, except when a meal engages the attention of the company in another way; but at its conclusion they again begin to drink; nor on such occasions do they much attend to the lapse of time, or even

the alternations of day and night, but abandon themselves to conversation and revelry, till, overpowered by their long vigils, they sink to sleep in the apartment in which they happen to be seated.

The Arctic nations, however, are not more distinguished for their sociality of disposition than for their love of intoxicating liquors. The last quality appears indeed to be an invariable attendant upon the first in almost all countries and climates; for even the inhabitants of many parts of the torrid zone, abstemious in this respect as they naturally are, think it necessary to make a moderate use of spirituous liquors at their festivals and feasts, and at all times when a large concourse of people happens to be assembled together for recreation. But neither they, nor the natives of any temperate region, regard an indulgence in wine as one of the chief sources of human enjoyment, or describe it in their mythologies as a celestial pleasure. The Hindoo gods are represented to drink amrita, a beverage conferring immortality upon those who partake of it. The deities of the Grecians use only nectar at their banquets, and the Turks are agreed that no liquor but sherbet will be found in Paradise; but the propensities of the Scandinavians required that one of inebriating qualities should abound

in *their* heaven, and Odin gratified them by declaring that metheglin is in daily use there. Nor is it easy to perceive why a passion for intoxicating liquors should be nearly peculiar to Arctic nations, except in those instances in which it has been introduced elsewhere by Europeans; for we should suppose that the people of tropical countries, experiencing the mental and bodily languor produced by a hot climate, would feel the necessity of using artificial stimulants for the purpose of exhilaration, even more strongly than those of cold ones do. But it is probable that that delicacy of fibre and tenderness of constitution which belong to the former, render them susceptible of the requisite excitement from agents much milder in quality than vinous or fermented liquors — such for instance as coffee, spices, tobacco, and perhaps several kinds of fruits. However, in comparing and contrasting the nature of the different stimulants employed by the inhabitants of the torrid and of the frigid zones, it should be recollected that they respectively seek different effects from their use. The nations of northern Europe give a preference to that kind of inebriation, whatever its degree may be, which increases the activity of their minds and the vividness of their ideas, and disposes them to indulge in agreeable trains of thought,

and bestows self-possession and freedom of utterance, and also animal courage and a spirit of resistance. On the other hand, the native of a hot climate desires that his intoxication may be of a tranquil and even lethargic kind, and that it may enable him to find satisfactory and absorbing pleasure within himself, and to remain insensible for the time to all external causes of annoyance; and he finds no agents or substances so well calculated to effect these ends as tobacco and opium. The moderate smokers of these herbs in tropical regions seldom exhibit any outward sign that they are under their influence, but sit motionless and silent, neither exchanging looks nor ideas, though they may be encircled by friends and associates. But the inebriated native of northern Europe, or northern America, whether civilized or savage, will neither be tranquil himself, nor allow others to be so. His delight at such times lies in external agency, and in commanding the attention of those around him; and he therefore sings, or talks loud, or plays antics, or does mischief. The opium smoker who has indulged too freely in his inhalations merely sinks down upon his carpet in a state of torpor, and a similar excess in the use of wine has at length a similar effect upon its victim; though, in general, not till he has first

quarrelled with his associates, or insulted his friend, or committed some outrage upon good feeling and propriety.

When we consider that nearly all nations in the world, whether civilized or savage, are in the daily habit of making use of intoxicating liquors or drugs, and that an indulgence in these constitutes one of the chief sources of enjoyment of the mass of society in the northern parts of our globe, we are led to form a depressing estimate of human nature, and of the real amount of human happiness. Let us minutely examine the circumstances and condition of the various communities of mankind that exist between the Arctic and Antarctic circles, and we shall find that even those amongst them that appear most favourably situated, in so far as respects the conveniences of life, contain few individuals that are not in the habit of seeking every opportunity of forgetting reality and escaping from themselves by the use of exhilarants, whatever may be the nature of these, or the way in which they are applied. The Russian peasant, or the North American Indian, intoxicating himself with brandy; the Turk smoking opium; the South Sea Islander sipping ava; the Kamtschatkan chewing moucho-more; and the civilized and refined man quaffing wine, are all of them actuated

by similar motives, and have a similar object in view—that of breaking the monotony of existence, and rendering themselves oblivious of their actual circumstances and condition. Even those persons who dislike exhilarating liquors, or who from various causes dare not indulge in their use, contrive to supply the want of them by resorting to stimulants of a different kind; and, no sooner is the business of the day at an end with them, than they hurry to places of public resort, and seek in the absorbing scenes of the drama, or in the gaiety of the ball-room, or in the excitement of the gaming-table, a temporary abstraction from real life, and a relief from the insipidity of its usual accompaniments. How few persons love to retire within themselves, or to examine their actual condition and prospects! How few find any enjoyment in their own internal resources, and prefer solitude to dissipation! A contemplative life is more natural and congenial to the inhabitants of tropical regions than to any other part of the human race, because of the inherent cheerfulness and serenity of their dispositions, and their taste for tranquil pleasures. Nevertheless, we find them often seeking that personal obliviousness which is obtained from the use of intoxicating substances; and if this be the case, we must expect to observe a similar habit

prevailing in an infinitely greater degree in Arctic countries, where the reflective character of the people is sombre, fretful, and desponding, and where a state of excitement is alone regarded as a state of happiness.

The climate and the physical peculiarities of the Arctic regions are unfavourable to the progress of human society, and to the developement of the higher and more refined attributes of human character. Wherever the necessaries of life are scarce, or rather wherever they cannot be obtained without considerable labour, the people are of a stern and unpliant disposition, jealous of their personal rights, prone to evil speaking, deficient in indulgence towards others, and benevolent only when their conscience and their prejudices happen to impel them in the same direction. Such is the general moral constitution of the Arctic nations; and their domestic life, though they for the most part fulfil its more important duties with commendable exactness, is austere in its aspect, and appears to be more a system of forbearance and restraint than a state of social harmony and endearment; nor do the members of a family often acquire a similarity of dispositions and pursuits calculated to make them take pleasure in the society of each other, or to continue mutually attached in after-life, when cir-

cumstances have separated them and placed them in different spheres of action.

But of all the defects that appertain to the character of the Arctic nations, the most peculiar and conspicuous is the homeliness and humbleness of their ideas, or rather their love of what is mean and insignificant. Despising the ornamental arts of human life, they make a merit of depreciating everything of the kind, upon the ground that the real utility of any object is the proper test of its value, and that all tastes and ideas which require artificial developement are fantastic in themselves and injurious to society. Whether this habit of mind depends upon a physical obtuseness of sensation produced by the operation of a rigorous climate, or is the offspring of that self-love which often causes illiterate men to undervalue everything that is not indigenous to their own soil, seems uncertain; but its existence seldom fails to become palpable when an uneducated native of the Arctic regions is carried to view any magnificent specimen of human taste or invention, whether this be a building, a picture, or a scene of ornament and splendour. His first impressions at such times are pain and displeasure, which gradually heighten into absolute irritation, and he endeavours to degrade the object before him in the estimation of others, by

demanding what purpose it serves, and reminding them of the perishableness of its nature; while he at the same time secretly regrets that it has ever been executed, and hopes that some accident may speedily destroy it. Nor can he bring himself to view with complacency, or even with toleration, any class of objects or trains of ideas that have no existence or locality in his native land. Heathy deserts, naked rocks, moaning winds, and treeless hills, are, in his opinion, the most agreeable constituents of rural scenery; the wild, ungraceful, and strongly accented melodies of the North afford him the highest musical pleasure of which he is susceptible; the oral and obscure traditions of mendicant bards appear to him the only specimens of literature that are worth preserving; and he loves unpretending manners, coarse habits, and a system of external meanness in respect to equipage and habitation, because his natural character is founded upon an antipathy to everything that involves the graceful, the expensive, the ingenious, the artificial, and the superb.

It is this constitution of mind, and not nationality, as is vulgarly supposed, that makes the native of the Arctic regions unwilling to visit or reside in foreign countries. Those beautiful scenes, those new modes of life, those specimens of the fine arts, those triumphs of know-

ledge, which never fail to delight and interest the unprejudiced traveller, wherever they may occur, are sources of pain and subjects of annoyance to the Arctic barbarian; and the more they abound in his path, the more does he regret having quitted his native land, and ventured amidst objects so uncongenial to his temper and disposition. That spirit which induced the hordes of the North, when they overran Europe, to injure or annihilate all the monuments of social life that happened to fall in their way, still exists, though in a suppressed form, amongst the population of most of the frigid parts of our globe; and it often developes itself there, causing the lower orders of men to take pleasure in various acts of petty and wanton destruction.

And will Europe ever be subjected to a second irruption of barbarians from the North? and will her governments and her social institutions be again, at some future period, thrown into disorder by the ravages of wandering hordes of people? Assuredly it would be absurd in her to anticipate anything of the kind from the quarter from whence her former spoliators are said to have proceeded. The mountains of Norway, the forests of Lapland, the steppes of Siberia, and the wastes of Tartary, would, combined together, be unable to supply a body of

men formidable enough to devastate, or even much disturb, any one of the more civilized states of Europe, though a Timurlane, or a Ghengis Khan, or a Nadir Shah, were to organize and conduct the expedition.

No; the barbarians whom civilized Europe has to dread, and who will one day ravage her, and overturn her social institutions, and reproduce over her whole extent what historians have called the "dark ages," exist at home, and constitute a large part of her enlightened population, and are reared and fostered by her as such, though it is evident that she is unconsciously training them up to become her destroyer.

In the Scandinavian mythology we are informed that the gods, pleased with the beauty and apparent harmlessness of the young wolf Fenris, nursed and educated him amongst themselves; but that, after some time, he grew so fierce and dangerous that they found it necessary, for their own safety, to bind him with chains, which have up to the present time restrained the exercise of his rage, but which he will at length break, and, rushing forth with uncontrollable fury, destroy both gods and men.

In this allegory we have a correct representation of the progress and result of the diffusion of knowledge amongst the lower orders of society in

civilized countries. General education is the Fenris which we are now bringing up, charmed with its external aspect and unobservant of its real and natural character, though the monster has already begun to be formidable to his protectors, and though the hour is quickly approaching when he will break loose, and turn upon themselves, and make them his first victims.

When the mass of the lower orders of society in Great Britain shall have become sufficiently enlightened and instructed to analyze their own condition, and to contrast it with that of their superiors—when they shall perceive that the national wealth is daily narrowing the sphere of its distribution, and will at length become almost exclusively concentrated in the hands of aristocratic, mercantile, and clerical monopolists—when they shall discover that these bodies have no community of interest with themselves, and that they wish to be regarded as privileged, authoritative, and distinct branches of human society; then will they bring into practical use the knowledge that is now being diffused amongst them, and convert it into an engine of revolution and destruction; and, assisted by it, break into pieces our complicated social machine, and throw into irremediable disorder its ill-assorted materials.

A catastrophe of this kind can be delayed or

prevented only by the placing of impediments in the way of the farther diffusion of knowledge amongst the lower classes; since, situated as they are, and probably ever must be, they can enjoy contentment, and live innocently, and feel reconciled to a state of subordination, only so long as they are allowed to remain ignorant and uninstructed.

WEST INDIES.

THE WEST INDIAN OCEAN.

Were a traveller, proceeding from the shores of Europe to those of the New World, to determine upon pursuing the route best calculated to please his eye, gratify his senses, and excite his expectations, he would select the one which Columbus followed on his first voyage. Had that great man made his approach to America in any other direction, his discoveries would have assumed a less enchanting aspect, and a less varied and interesting character. Supposing he had coasted Africa till the land begins to trend to the eastward, (which it first does a little north of the equator,) and then sailed due west, he would have come upon that part of South America which is now called Surinam; and where thick forests, extensive swamps, and rivers obstructed by mangroves, would have given him an unfavourable idea of the wealth, fertility, and healthiness of the new continent. On the other hand, had he pur-

sued the parallel of the island of Gomera, which, strictly speaking, formed his point of departure, instead of gradually sloping his course to the southward, he would have made the low sandy shores of Florida, and there have found equally little to please his eye or his imagination; while their warlike and vigorous inhabitants would most likely have repulsed him, and killed many of his people, had he attempted to take possession of the country.

But in pursuing the course that he did, he gradually introduced his fleet to the heats of the tropic; he had the advantage of a steady trade-wind, and of the smooth seas which always attend it; and when he reached the expected land, instead of finding an immense continent covered with woods, and equally difficult to be conquered or explored, he met with beautiful isles, easy of access, at a convenient distance from each other, and inhabited by a mild, a hospitable, and a happy race of men. I need scarcely remark, that I do not mean to infer that Columbus had the least expectation that the above favourable circumstances would attend his discovery of the New World. He could not have had the faintest idea of what he was to meet with, or any reason to prefer one parallel of latitude to another in projecting the course of his voyage; and his approaching Ame-

rica by the way of the Bahama Islands must be regarded as the effect of accident.

The voyager coming from the northward experiences a delicious change of climate when he enters the sphere of the trade-winds. The air has no longer any harshness or asperity; it feels soft and bland to the skin, and respiration is particularly slow and easy; mists and fogs are unknown; the sea is but slightly agitated; and the mind partakes of the tranquillity of Nature, and becomes reconciled to the imprisonment of a ship. Columbus appears to have enjoyed all this in his first voyage, for we find the following remarks in his journal, soon after he had got within the influence of the trade-wind: "The air was mild and delightful, and we wanted nothing but the song of the nightingale; and the sea was as smooth as a river." In another place he says:—"The sea was like the river of Seville, thank God! the temperature was also as moderate as it is there in the middle of April, and the air was so fragrant that it was a pleasure to breathe."

In no part of the ocean are voyages attended with so much enjoyment as in the West Indian seas between November and May. The temperature of the air is then always regular and moderate; the sea-breeze blows steadily during the day, and the land-wind succeeds it at night. No sooner

does the vessel lose sight of one island than she comes in view of another; and she often finds herself in the midst of three or four of them; while hour after hour new scenes of beauty unfold themselves to the eye: here the rich and cultivated savannah is seen extending back from the shore; there forests, impenetrable by the sun, cover the plains and hills; or naked cliffs rise perpendicularly from the smooth beach, and the pinnacles of mountains appear far inland, their ridges sloping gradually to the edge of the sea, where the verdant mangroves conceal the strand, and are washed by the white surf of the advancing tide. It is not surprising then that Columbus should have been enchanted by scenes of this kind, while pursuing his discoveries in the Bahama archipelago. Though he had before traversed the Mediterranean, and visited many of the Ionian islands, every object, living and inanimate, that he observed in the West Indian Ocean, seemed to him incomparably to surpass those of a similar kind in the Old World; and though we may suppose that his joy at the successful result of his voyage disposed him to view things through a flattering medium, his descriptions, as many modern travellers can aver, are true to Nature and destitute of exaggeration.

That part of the Atlantic intervening between the Cape Verd Islands and the Bahama archipe-

lago, forms an unbroken expanse of ocean of unfathomable depth; but the navigator, on reaching the latter chain, enters a shallow sea, through which he can scarcely find a passage on account of the islands, rocks, and sand-banks which extend in clusters as far west as the southern extremity of Florida.

This sudden transition from deep water to shallow, and the great elevation of most of the West Indian Islands, have led some theorists to conjecture that the eastern part of the continent of America, between the parallels of N. lat. 16° and 27°, has been overflowed by a sudden influx of the waters of the ocean, and that the various islands which appear in that part of the sea are no more than the tops of mountains or the ridges of hills belonging to the submerged country; and they assert that the extreme and disproportionate narrowness of the Isthmus of Darien, compared with any other part of America, is a circumstance highly corroborative of the above supposition. It may further be remarked, that in various charts made previous to the voyages of Columbus, a large tract of land is laid down in that very quarter, under the name of Antilia, upon no other authority it would appear than that of ancient tradition; and some have therefore considered this Antilia to have been the

Atlantis of Plato, and with reason too, for the generally-assigned position of the latter upon the west coast of Africa does not accord well with the allusions that are made to its distance from Europe by all the ancient writers who have mentioned it.

The West Indian Ocean was regarded as the scene of many wonders by the earlier navigators. Columbus himself, in his third voyage, expresses his conviction that the terrestrial paradise is situated in the neighbourhood of the Gulf of Paria. He supposes that the earth, instead of being exactly spherical, is elongated into a mighty projection, directly under that part of the equator which corresponds with the longitude of Terra Firma, and that paradise is placed upon its summit, to which the ascent is regular and gradual, at least for a certain distance, through the superincumbent ocean. It was the vast accumulation of fresh water extending far into the sea near the mouth of the Oronoco, that led him to form this idea; for he conceived that there was no river upon earth great enough to pour it forth, and therefore that it must descend from the top of the elevated land above described.

"I have already," says he in his journal, "given my opinion of this hemisphere and its form, and I am persuaded that were I to pass under the

equator, on arriving at the elevated point to which I have alluded, I should find the temperature more mild, and a difference in the constellations and the waters; though, in saying this, I do not mean to assert that the highest part of the universe is navigable, or that there even is water there, or that it is possible for any one to ascend so high, because I am satisfied that it is the site of the terrestrial paradise, which no individual can reach except by the will of God."—"There are there strong indications of the existence of the terrestrial paradise, for the situation as well as the appearances accord perfectly with the opinion of wise and holy theologians; for I have never read or heard of so great a quantity of fresh water being found encompassed with salt water, and in contact with it; and what still farther supports my opinion, is the delicious temperature; and if the water in question does not proceed from the terrestrial paradise, it will be the more wonderful, because I do not believe that there is so deep and large a river in the world."

The above extravagant theory, and the seriousness with which Columbus endeavours to establish its correctness, would at first view lead us to attribute to him a degree of ignorance and credulity which seems incompatible with his known vigour of intellect and grandeur of mind; but it

ought to be remembered, that he possessed a highly poetical imagination, and an exquisite sense of the beautiful and sublime; and he consequently delighted to indulge opinions of a novel and magnificent nature, and which involved an original and brilliant train of ideas. All the descriptions of what he saw in the course of his voyages are remarkable for their tone of energy and elevation, and also for their accurate simplicity; for Columbus never was guilty of exaggeration, and never condescended to introduce any mixture of the marvellous into his narratives. His relation of things out of the common course of nature, are the reveries of a poetical and enthusiastic mind ranging beyond the confines of the material world—not the inventions and credulous mistakes of a mere lover of the wild and the wonderful.

I have alluded to the supposed submersion of the eastern part of America, lying in the neighbourhood of the Gulf of Mexico, and to the theory which considers the West Indian Islands as the summits of its mountains, and the tops of its ridges of hills. Were the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans made to communicate by the formation of a canal through the Isthmus of Darien, as has often been projected, the level of the West Indian Sea would in all probability be greatly lowered,

and new lands and islets would be exposed, which, though they might not nearly equal in extent that portion of territory which some persons believe to have been overflowed, would still add considerably to the archipelagoes of that part of the world. It is yet undecided whether any difference exists in the levels of the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans; but certain circumstances induce us to suppose that there does, and that the former sea is the higher of the two. The constant and regular motion of the sea from east to west must of itself occasion a general accumulation of water on the Atlantic side of the Isthmus of Panama; and this cannot fail to be greatly augmented by the particular influence of the Gulf stream, which sweeps along the eastern shores of the continent, seeking in vain for an outlet, and which is in reality no more than a branch of the general equatorial current above alluded to. Were a navigable canal to be opened through the Isthmus of Darien, even upon the smallest scale, the rush of water that would take place from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean would speedily enlarge it, till it at length became a channel or strait capable of affording egress to the Florida stream, which, instead of winding along the eastern coast of America as far as the banks of Newfoundland, as it now does, would flow directly from east to west

towards the Philippine Islands, causing a great diminution in the waters of the Gulf of Mexico and the adjoining seas. The soundings upon the great bank of Bahama, which extends along the northern side of Cuba, do not, on an average, exceed fifteen or twenty fathoms; while many parts of it are scarcely navigable for a boat at ebb tide. Half of it would be left dry by the diversion of the Gulf stream into the Pacific Ocean; and innumerable little islets would raise their heads above water, and impede navigation so much as to render the West India Islands inaccessible by that route.

But allowing that these inconveniences would result from the junction of the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, and be counterbalanced by still more important advantages, we are led to ask if the accomplishment of so grand an operation lies within the power of man. History informs us in a thousand places that he has seldom been able to break through the barriers laid down by Nature in cases similar to the one in question. Xerxes, with his millions of followers, failed in cutting through the peninsula of Mount Athos. The various kings of Egypt, who built the pyramids, were yet unable to form a canal of communication between the Red Sea and the Mediterranean; and the Ptolemies, with all their vast re-

sources, had much ado to open a channel to connect the Nile with the port of Arsinoe.

Were the nations of Europe to unite, as has been proposed, in bearing the expense of joining the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, the requisite means for the execution of the work might perhaps be raised; but political rivalry would place insuperable difficulties in the way of their application. Each nation engaged in the enterprise would demand peculiar commercial privileges in return for its co-operation and assistance; endless disputes would occur, and the workmen of the respective powers would soon be called upon to throw aside their pickaxes and take up their swords, and the scene of peaceful labour would become a field of bloodshed.

Supposing the work accomplished, and that the sovereigns of Europe and the republics of America had agreed by solemn treaty that the passage from one sea to another should be free to all nations in peace and in war, which of them would hesitate to blockade the entrance when his interests happened to dictate such a measure, and his fleets enabled him to execute it? The canal of Darien, instead of being a benefit to commerce, and to the human race, would prove a fertile source of political dissension, and a new stimulus to that love of conquest which has already desolated so

large a portion of the world, and in the way of which it is fervently to be wished that Nature had thrown farther impediments than she has really done, and altogether prevented the different races of mankind from exploring her surface, or ever seeing or coming into contact with each other.

It is not a little singular, that the discoverer of the New World should have found naturalized there one of the most peculiar notions of the Old one—I mean a belief in the existence of a race of Amazons. There are certain ideas and prejudices which are common to all nations in the infancy of society; and which being in a manner constitutional to our species, we feel no astonishment at finding them diffused alike near the pole and under the equator: but the one in question certainly does not belong to this class; for what can seem more opposed to nature, observation, and reason, than a community or association of female warriors living apart from men; and if such a thing never existed anywhere, how has a fable so repugnant to probability been received and credited in both hemispheres? It is impossible to believe that the idea was suggested to the natives of America by their first European visiters, for Columbus heard of the Amazons on his second voyage; and Orellana, the first explorer of the great river of the same name, was

cautioned in the beginning of his expedition, by one of the caciques who lived upon its banks, and who had never before seen a white man, to beware of a nation of warlike females not far distant, who were likely to attack him and oppose his progress: and surely the invaders of the New World had no taste for so innocent an employment as that of instructing the Indians in the fables and traditions of the Old one; nor were the latter likely either to relish or comprehend these, and least of all to naturalize them amongst themselves and retail them to others.

Our first acquaintance with the Amazons of America is derived from Peter Martyr, in his account of the second voyage of Columbus. "By the way," says he, "there appeared from the north a great islande, which the captives that were taken in Hispaniola called Madanino, or Matanino (now Martinique), affirming it to be inhabited only with women, to whom the Cannibeles (Carribs) have access at certaine times of the yeare, as in olde times the Thracians hadde to the Amazones on the island of Lesbos; the men children they send to their fathers, but the women they keepe with themselves. They have great and strong caves and dennes in the grounde, to the which they flee for safeguard if any men resort unto them at any other time than is ap-

poynted, and there defend themselves with bowes and arrowes against the violence of such as attempt to invade them."

Condamine, in his voyage down the Amazon River, made repeated and particular inquiries respecting the existence of a nation of female warriors in that part of the world, and all the Indians agreed in assuring him that the fact was undoubted; and in one instance he was referred for farther information to an old cacique who had actually seen several of the race; but when our traveller reached his abode, he found to his regret that he was recently dead. The natives also showed him certain green and rounded pebbles, which they held in great esteem, and the name of which expressed that they were obtained from a community of "women without husbands." M. Condamine judiciously remarks, that if an association of females living totally apart from men can be supposed to exist in any country, it is in America. There the sex, being accustomed to attend their husbands in their hunting and in their hostile expeditions, become inured to hardships, and acquire a strength of constitution, and an hability in the arts of life, which render them almost independent of the labours or assistance of the males, whose society is at the same time apt to become irksome

to them, on account of their tyranny, harshness, and indolence. It is easy to believe that, under such circumstances, a number of women might resolve upon deserting their husbands, and for ever withdrawing from the evils and miseries of the married state. Taking up their abode in the forests, they would form themselves into a social community, not only for the sake of mutual convenience, but also that they might be able to resist the invasions of the men and avoid their bondage; while their numbers would be constantly recruited by the arrival of discontented individuals of their own sex, whom the fame of their independence and security had attracted into fellowship.

It appears to me, that the above is the only satisfactory way in which we can account for the formation and existence of a community of Amazons; and when authors, in speaking of such, inform us that its members are in the habit of receiving a visit from the other sex once a year, an air of improbability instantly attaches itself to the whole narrative; for we perceive in this periodical intercourse between the sexes, however limited its duration may have been, an infringement of those principles which appear to be essential to the constitution of a nation of females. Were not the separation between the sexes

total and uninterrupted, encroachments on the one side and love on the other would shortly destroy the independence of the community, and lead to desertion and discontent amongst its members, and throw the old and young into a state of discordance with each other. Sir Walter Raleigh found various reports on the subject of Amazons current in Guiana, but these are liable to the objections above stated. "They which are not far from Guiana," says he, "do accompany with men but once in a year, and for the time of one month, which I gather by their relation to be in April. At that time all the kings of the borders assemble, and the queens of the Amazons; and after the queens have chosen, the rest cast lots for their valentines. This one month they feast, dance, and drink of their wines in abundance; and the moon being down, they all depart to their own provinces." If ever a community of Amazons did exist, we may safely conclude that it was not numerous; that instead of being formidable to its neighbours, it had great difficulty in defending itself; and that its strength was recruited and kept up, not by the female children of its members, but by women whose misery and misfortunes had induced them to renounce common society. Thus Pliny describes an association of men who lived in palm groves on the coast of the

Arabian Gulf, and who neither admitted females amongst them, nor ever had intercourse with the sex; yet their number always continued nearly the same, because they were daily joined by persons seeking an asylum from disappointments, persecution, and the various miseries of human life.

When the timid natives of the West Indian Islands had somewhat recovered from the panic which the first excesses and ravages of their invaders had occasioned, they began to consider in what manner they could best rid themselves of their tyrants, and being unable to accomplish this by force, they endeavoured to decoy them into the search for new lands, by extravagant tales of the riches and wonders to be found in regions lying farther to the westward. After a time the caciques would never admit that their own islands or territories produced either gold or spices; but they always declared to the Spaniards that they would procure abundance of both if they continued their voyage or their travels for only a few days longer. The most celebrated of these fabulous inventions was the report circulated by the Indians of the existence of a fountain endowed with the quality of renewing a man's youth, although he might be far declined in the vale of years. Its situation was described to be upon an island near the coast of Florida; and in placing it

there, the narrators, no doubt, had in view the destruction of all who might go in search of it; the natives of that country being then the most warlike, independent, and jealous of invasion of any people in the western world, as the Spaniards afterwards experienced to their cost, when Ferdinand Soto attempted the conquest of Florida. Several persons casually sought for the miraculous fountain in the course of their voyages; but Ponce de Leon, a man of rank and talents, fitted out an expedition expressly for its discovery, and traversed a great part of the Bahama seas in pursuit of that seducing object; nor shall we feel much astonished at his blindness and credulity, if we reflect that the study of alchymy had not then been banished from the cabinets of the philosophers of Europe, and that the elixir of life, and the art of transmuting metals, were still considered to be within human attainment.

It was likewise the age of enthusiasm and love of enterprise; the New World was regarded as the seat of unknown wonders; and the collecting of gold, which had hitherto engaged the attention of adventurers there, was becoming a vulgar and uncertain pursuit, and presented a less fascinating aspect than the search for an object which the precious metals could not purchase, and which science had hitherto failed in procuring. Peter

Martyr, who wrote his Decades of the Ocean about ten years before the period of Ponce de Leon's expedition, expresses himself inclined to believe in the existence of the fountain of Bimini; and argues that as the eagle, and hart, and snakes, and several other animals, have the faculty of renewing their youth, it is reasonable to suppose that men may attain a similar power by curiously prying into the secrets of Nature. The mildness of the climate of the West Indian Ocean, the almost perpetual sunshine there, and the apparently undying vegetation of its islands, doubtless affected the imagination of those who were disposed to credit the tale of the miraculous spring, and led them to regard its assigned situation as strictly consistent with probability, and as an encouragement to engage in its discovery.

But let us turn from the regions of fiction to examine what the West Indian seas really produce for the use of men. The turtle here abounds in a degree that is unknown anywhere else, and it would appear that it constituted a considerable part of the food of the aboriginal inhabitants of all the islands; for the early voyagers describe them as catching it by means of a small fish, which they trained for that kind of marine hunting, and which they always carried with them when they went to sea in their canoes, having

previously secured it alongside by a string tied to its tail, and which could be lengthened or shortened at pleasure. When the hunting fish, which was a species of remora, saw a turtle under water, it immediately rushed towards it, and fixed itself so firmly upon the shell by means of its suckers, that the Indian fisherman had no difficulty in pulling both animals close to his canoe, when, on lifting them out of the sea, the remora let go its hold, and dropped into its natural element, while the turtle was taken on board and killed. It appears that this kind of fishing was never practised by any but the aborigines of the West Indian Islands, and that it got into disuse and oblivion upon their extinction, probably because the Spaniards scorned to adopt any of the usages of that despised and persecuted race. Hence the story of the hunting fish was long disbelieved; no instance of its powers in that respect having ever come within modern observation, even in the places where it is said to have been most generally employed in the chase of turtles and tortoises. But these doubts have lately been removed, and Humboldt, who has examined the anatomical structure of the remora, is satisfied that it is capable of performing all that has ever been attributed to it; and he supposes that it is fear that induces it to attach itself firmly

to any object, when it feels itself forcibly pulled back by a cord or by the hand of man. He says farther upon this subject, "We know in the present day, from the united authorities of Captains Rogers, Dampier, and Commerson, that the same expedient to catch turtle, practised in the Iardinillos, (islets on the coast of Cuba,) is adopted by the inhabitants of the east coast of Africa in the neighbourhood of Cape Natal, and also in Mozambique and in Madagascar."

The abundance and excellence of the West Indian turtle arises from the fitness of the seas and islands in that quarter of the world for its propagation and growth. The Bahama ocean presents a congregation of islets and sand-banks, mostly connected together by ridges of rock extending under water, the whole forming as it were a large turtle-pond, where these animals are never annoyed by a turbulent sea, and where they find in every direction suitable places to deposit their eggs, which are not liable to be dug up and destroyed by beasts of prey, as is the case in many other places.

The West Indian Ocean abounds in various kinds of fish; but, by a strange anomaly, many individuals of those species that are best calculated for food, are of so poisonous a quality as to endanger, and even destroy the lives of the people

who happen to eat of them. And this peculiarity becomes the more embarrassing and fatal, from the same kinds of fish proving at one time an agreeable and harmless article of food, and at another a most deleterious one, although their external appearance and taste are alike, or very nearly so, in both cases. Hundreds of persons are known to have perished from fish poison in the West Indian Islands, and probably many more have fallen victims to it whose death has by mistake been attributed to other causes. The number of species of fish that are liable to be poisonous is not very accurately known, but the principal ones are the dolphin, the kingfish, the barracuta, the albacore, and the yellow-bill sprat, (*clupea thryssa*,) which is the most virulent and dangerous of all.

The cause of the frequently poisonous quality of the fish of the West Indian seas is yet unknown, and seems to be beyond human investigation. Some have attributed it to the impregnations which they suppose the animals receive from veins or masses of native copper lying under water; but the existence of these is by no means ascertained; and the first suspicion of it has probably been suggested by the dull verdigrise colour of the sea upon the great Bahama bank, where poisonous fish at all times particularly

abound. In crossing that bank in an American trader, I was struck with the singular hue of the water, which the master of her assured me was produced by beds of copper lying beneath us; and he added that it was highly dangerous to eat of the dolphin caught in that neighbourhood; and that when a vessel was becalmed there for several days, the health of all the crew seldom failed to be more or less affected by the exhalations. This last assertion is completely at variance with the first; for if the atmosphere upon the great Bahama bank is really unwholesome, which we have strong reasons to doubt, that cannot arise from its being impregnated with copper, which is diffusible through the air only by fumes, and not by watery evaporation. Besides, the metal in question is by no means so sudden and active a poison as to destroy life in less than half-an-hour, or even instantaneously, as the *clupea thryssa* is reported sometimes to do; and as copper taken internally is equally fatal to animals and to man, how does it happen that the fish which live in the Bahama seas, resist the effects of its virus, and at the same time retain it in their own systems, in its fullest activity? while, if the deleterious quality of the fish depended upon its absorption of copper, all individuals of one species, or rather of any species, caught in the

same place, would be equally poisonous, which is so far from being confirmed by observation, that the good and the bad varieties are often drawn up in the same net.

Poisonous fish are most common in the neighbourhood of that chain of islands called by the French Lesser Antilles, and by the English Carribean Islands. These were peopled by a race of cannibals who used to invade Cuba, and Hispaniola, and Jamaica, for the purpose of capturing their inhabitants and feeding upon their bodies. Was it the repeated fatal effects which they experienced from eating the fish caught upon their own coasts that forced them to seek some other kind of food? And their own islands producing none of the larger quadrupeds, may not we suppose that they were thus led to prey upon the human species and become cannibals?

GENERAL PHYSICAL CHARACTER OF THE WEST INDIES.

It is much to be wished that navigators, on discovering unknown lands, would never give them what may appear in their opinion to be appropriate names; for future observation seldom fails to show the inaccuracy and unsuitableness of these, though not till habit has so long confirmed their use, that it is highly inconvenient to alter them or to adopt new ones. The poorest language in the world would afford distinctive names for every part of the earth's surface, without employing a single word that had already been appropriated in that way; but most of our celebrated navigators seem to have thought differently, and have disfigured their maps, and caused much local confusion, by conferring upon their discoveries the popular appellations of various parts of Europe or of their respective countries. The New South Wales, New Hebrides, and New Caledonia of Cook, are as objectionable as the New South

Shetland of Weddel, or the North Georgia of Parry; and though the Americans have been ridiculed for applying to the districts of the western states the names of celebrated men, they have followed a rational principle in doing this, and well deserve imitation by modern geographers.

Europeans have been so sensible of the impropriety of the name of West Indies, given to that archipelago by Columbus, that various alterations have been proposed, which have led to the greatest confusion in the local definitions of that part of the world. Some geographers call these islands Antilles; others denote them by the word Carribean; and a third class give them the name of American Islands; while the subordinate terms Bahamas, Leucayos, Virgin, Leeward, and Windward Islands, used to discriminate particular parts of the chain, render the present nomenclature equally perplexing and unsystematic. Carribean seems to be the most characteristic appellation for the whole archipelago, and also for the ocean in which it is situated, and some foreign writers have employed it in that way; but I have thought that my authority is not great enough in such matters to admit of my laying aside the English popular and long-established name of West Indian Islands.

Much as these islands vary in size and geographical position, they nevertheless bear a strong general resemblance to each other. All of them are remarkable for the loftiness of their interior, the land in the smaller ones rising gradually from the shore, and forming a single hill of considerable elevation; and in the greater, taking a more extensive sweep, and grouping itself into mountains, which generally assume a longitudinal direction, and intersect the island from one end to the other. The coasts are mostly bold, and afford numerous bays and harbours of easy access, and safe for shipping; and when low, (at least in the larger islands,) rich and level savannahs extend backwards many miles, and are here and there divided by limpid and never-failing streams, few of which are navigable except for boats or canoes. The savannahs, if uncultivated, are covered with herbage and shrubbery, but no sooner does the land begin to rise, than clumps and groves of trees make their appearance; and these, as the elevation increases, become taller and more extensive, and at length unite themselves into one continuous forest, which clothes the mountains, even to their very tops, with a mantle of verdant foliage so thick as to be impenetrable to the sun.

Many of the small islands rise from the surface of the sea like volcanic cones, and are almost des-

titute of trees, and unfit for cultivation, except immediately round their bases. Those islets called Bahamas and Leucayos are in general little better than barren rocks encircled by a beach of broken shells; but, nevertheless, they have their peculiar beauties, which are heightened by their contrast with other spots of superior fertility. The hills and mountains of the West Indian archipelago, in whatever part of it they occur, are very lofty in proportion to the extent of the islands containing them. Thus, Jamaica, though only one hundred and fifty miles long and forty broad, presents a peak which rises upwards of seven thousand feet above the level of the ocean; and the interior parts of Hispaniola are in most places more than half that elevation, while Cuba is intersected by a ridge of lofty hills about five hundred miles long. This general elevation, by attracting the clouds, and causing frequent showers throughout a great part of the year, confers upon these islands a beauty and a perennial verdure which belong to few other countries lying within the tropics, besides rendering the streams ever abundant and flowing, and insuring a constant supply of water for artificial irrigation and other purposes connected with agriculture. Las Casas, in his abstract of the first voyage of Columbus, says — "He (the admiral) "was much astonished to observe

so many lovely and lofty islands; and he assures the king and queen that the mountains which he has seen since yesterday, upon these coasts and isles, are such as he believes to equal any in the world for beauty and elevation."

In the West Indian Islands, the average temperature is much lower than their geographical position would lead us to expect, or is found in any continent whatever situated under the same parallel of latitude. Enjoying the full influence of the trade-wind during the day, and of the land breezes at night, and refreshed by frequent showers and by numerous streams of water, and protected from the sun by extensive forests, they are strangers to that fiery glowing of the earth's surface, and that burning atmosphere, which annually for months together distress and exhaust Nature in the tropical regions of Asia and Africa.

The highest average range of the thermometer in any of the islands is 84° at noon, and in some of them it is from six to ten degrees lower. The rains are moderate, and the general elevation of the land everywhere causes the surface of the soil to dry quickly; and hence the air in the interior of the islands is always pure, elastic, and unloaded with vapours. In Jamaica there are lands under cultivation four thousand feet above the level of the sea; and in such places vegetation loses its

tropical character, and the plants and fruits of Europe flourish and attain maturity, the cold being so great that the inhabitants require fires in their houses during several months of the year.

Nevertheless, the beauty and fertility of these islands is continually liable to be ravaged and injured by hurricanes, the most terrific and destructive of all Nature's irregularities, but which, happily, are now much less frequent than they used to be. It would also appear that their violence and strength have considerably diminished, if we compare the early accounts of the damage and misery which they always occasioned, with the details upon the same subject furnished in more modern times; though part of this difference may be owing to the precautions latterly adopted in the construction of buildings and the protection of crops in those islands which are more particularly liable to be assailed by the tropical tempests in question.

The West Indian hurricanes are most common in the north-eastern part of the archipelago, and they have never been known to extend so far southward as Trinidad, or so far westward as the Gulf of Mexico, though very hard gales of wind often occur in the last quarter. The first hurricane on record is the one which assailed Columbus in the course of his fourth voyage, when he

was off the principal Spanish settlement in St. Domingo. He foresaw that a tempest would shortly arise, and he sent to Ovando, the governor of the place, to request that he might be allowed to take refuge in the harbour; but this being refused, he was obliged to stand out to sea and face the storm. "What man, without even excepting Job, would not have died of despair," says Columbus, "to find that, at a crisis when the lives of myself, my son, my brother, and my friends were in danger, I was prohibited from approaching that country and those ports which, under the blessing of God, I had purchased for Spain at the expense of my blood?"

At this time a fleet of twenty-four ships was about to set sail for Spain, carrying large quantities of gold and pearls, partly the revenues of the king, and partly the property of those private individuals who were passengers on board. Columbus, notwithstanding Ovando's inhumanity, advised him to detain the fleet for a few days, because a violent storm was likely soon to occur; but his warnings were treated with contempt, and the vessels were suffered to proceed on their voyage. Before the close of the following day, twenty of their number, with fifteen hundred persons, had foundered in the hurricane. The loss of treasure on this occasion was so great as

to affect the financial resources of Spain for several years after. But, previous to this, the natives of Hispaniola and Cuba had described the nature and ravages of hurricanes to the Spaniards; and the preceding summer, one of these had desolated part of the latter island, and caused an irruption of the sea of so terrific a kind, that it was viewed with superstitious dread by the inhabitants, as ominous of the still greater evils which they had reason to expect from their European invaders.

Persons long resident in the West Indian Islands are able to foretel the approach of hurricanes with tolerable accuracy, by the observation of certain atmospherical phenomena; but this kind of knowledge proves, unfortunately, of little avail either on shore or at sea, the violence of the tempest generally rendering impotent all precautions that may be employed against its destructive effects. On the day preceding the hurricane, the weather is almost always calm and sultry, and the sea-breeze does not set in at the usual hour, or perhaps is not felt at all; the sky is red and hazy, and the horizon surcharged with clouds, and the noise of the surf seems particularly loud and distinct; and thunder, more or less distant, is heard incessantly. At length, the wind begins to blow in shifting

gusts, and to lull again: these increase in strength and frequency, and ere long the blast comes roaring from one quarter with concentrated fury. The cane-fields first experience its effects, the plants being torn up by the roots, and whirled through the air as if they were chaff; the coffee plantations are next levelled to the ground, and appear like heaps of brushwood; the palms, after bending and groaning beneath the tempest, fall prostrate; and, as its rage augments, whole forests are levelled; houses are unroofed and thrown down; the low grounds are flooded by torrents of water, and the sea is driven in upon the land; the inhabitants everywhere quit their tottering houses, and seek safety in the open fields, under a sky obscured by rain and furrowed by lightning, and think only of saving their lives, having abandoned their property to the elements, like shipwrecked people escaping from their sinking vessel in a boat.

These hurricanes often blow with a degree of strength which would be deemed a physical impossibility, were it not proved by numerous facts and observations. In other parts of the world, the most violent gales of wind merely throw down trees and dismast ships; but the West Indian hurricanes have in many instances levelled to the ground large stone buildings, such as churches

and barracks, and dismounted guns of high calibre from their carriages, and swept them away. In Barbadoes, a twelve-pounder was by the force of the wind and waves, removed from its place upon a battery, and conveyed a distance of one hundred and forty yards; and, during the same hurricane, fourteen hundred houses were blown down in the town of Port-Royal, Martinico, and also the cathedral and seven churches, and the prisons, hospital, and barracks.

In the greatest hurricanes the wind is calculated to have a velocity of eighty or ninety miles an hour, but this would not be adequate to produce the effects above described, unless we suppose that the currents of air constituting these tempests always possess a gravity and density greater than ordinary, which we have no reason to believe; for it has never been remarked that hurricanes are attended by a fall of temperature in the atmosphere. They differ from common gales of wind only in their superior violence, and in their blowing from all, or nearly all, the points of the compass in succession, and within the space of a few hours; for they do not blow from opposite quarters at the same moment, as is vulgarly believed, nor can a thing of the kind take place under any circumstances whatever. Fourteen or fifteen severe hurricanes, and a much greater number of less

considerable ones, have occurred in the West Indian Islands since they were first settled by Europeans, and occasioned incalculable loss to the inhabitants. The most violent and general of them all happened in 1780, causing dreadful and before unheard-of ravages by land and sea, and destroying within a few days more ships and people than had up to that time perished in the sanguinary war which the French, English, and Spaniards were then carrying on in the same quarter of the world.

Jamaica has oftener been desolated by hurricanes than any other island of the Western archipelago; and Nature, as if envious of her beauty and fertility, has also subjected her to earthquakes of the most formidable kind. Many times have these laid prostrate her cities, and swallowed up their inhabitants, and as many times have subsequent pestilence and irregular seasons thinned her population, and rendered her soil unproductive. In 1692, the town of Port-Royal and three thousand persons sunk into the ocean; and in 1780, that of Savannah la Mar was totally overwhelmed by an irruption of the waves, caused by an earthquake, the effects of which last extended more or less over nearly the whole island. In both instances the vapours exhaled from the earth, and the dead bodies cast forth by the sea, occasioned an ende-

mical disease, which in the space of a month destroyed several thousand individuals.

It is the dread and expectation of these physical convulsions that alone destroy that serenity of life which the inhabitants of the West Indian Islands generally enjoy; for nowhere does the soil afford a greater variety of productions, whether useful or luxurious. The forests abound with valuable timber, the mountains supply exhaustless streams of excellent water, and the plains and valleys are, during the greater part of the year, covered with rich pastures. The cultivated savannahs produce the maize, or Indian corn, yielding two crops a year; and also rice, and millet, and calavances, besides yams, potatoes of different kinds, cassava, and all the best European vegetables. Plantations of sugar-cane extend over a large part of the country; and groves of coffee, cocoa, and cotton-trees flourish wherever they happen to be planted, and nursed by the hand of man. The gardens contain an assemblage of the finest fruits in the world. In them the pine-apple, the mango, the orange, the avocado-pear, the guava, the custard-apple, the banana, the shaddock, the fig, and the pomegranate, attract the attention, and equally delight the eye and gratify the taste. The cattle and other domestic animals of Europe, as may be supposed, thrive

in such a country, and afford abundant supplies of food, in addition to the small game which is more or less plentiful in all the uncultivated districts.

With respect to the fruits of the West Indies, it has been a frequent subject of discussion with travellers and botanists, which of them are indigenous to the islands, and which have been introduced by the European colonists. There seems to be little doubt that the pine-apple was found in the country by the Spaniards, as likewise the guava, the avocado-pear, and the shaddock; but it is equally certain that the orange was imported, and a tradition exists that the tree was first planted by the hands of the celebrated Las Casas, archbishop of Chiapa. But it is even more worthy of remark, that the history and origin of the sugar-cane still remain uncertain; some contending that it is indigenous to the western archipelago, and others that it was brought there by Columbus on his second voyage. Bryan Edwards endeavours to reconcile these two opinions, by supposing that both are correct, and that the discoverer of America actually carried plants of sugar-cane to Hispaniola, not being aware that they already grew in that island and in the neighbouring ones. This explanation, though plausible, is far from being satisfactory; for it is evident from Colum-

bus's private journal of his first voyage, that he paid particular attention to the vegetable productions of the new regions which he was exploring, and we can scarcely believe that the sugar-cane, had it existed there, would have escaped his notice. Humboldt says decidedly, that this plant was obtained from the Canary Islands, and introduced into the western archipelago by the Spaniards; and his authority will by most persons be considered conclusive on all botanical subjects connected with the American world.

When we consider the magnitude of Jamaica, Hispaniola, and Cuba, and that a very large proportion of each of these islands has hitherto remained without cultivation or inhabitants, we are astonished to find them destitute of all the larger quadrupeds, and containing only a few species of the smaller ones. The wild hogs and cattle which once abounded in the two former islands, and which still exist in the latter, were introduced by the Spaniards, who on their first settling in the archipelago, suffered severely from want of food, and often ranged the forests in vain in search of game of any description, and thought themselves fortunate if they succeeded in catching a few coneys or wild rabbits. Had either carnivorous or graminivorous animals of magnitude existed, they would thus certainly have discovered them, but

as no mention is made of such in their narrations, we must conclude that the quadruped species inhabiting the islands were not formerly more numerous or important than they are in the present day.

The only animals that deserve particular notice are the mountain crab and the iguana, both of which form favourite articles of food in most of the islands, uninviting to the appetite as they at first appear to be. At a certain season annually, the mountain crabs descend in vast multitudes from the highlands in the interior of the country to the sea-shore, there to deposit their spawn; having accomplished which, they return inland to their former haunts, where they conceal themselves in crevices of the rocks, or in holes under ground, and subsist upon herbage. No sooner have the spawn attained a certain degree of maturity than they quit the coast, and follow the steps of their parents, so that two distinct migrations happen every year, during which all persons have an opportunity of collecting as many crabs as they please. These animals are regarded as exquisite delicacies; but they are observed to be diminishing in number, and in some of the smaller and more populous islands they have either become extinct, or no longer make their appearance in such large flocks as they used to do.

The iguana is an animal of the lizard species, usually about four feet long, and not unlike a young alligator. It is much esteemed as an article of food; but is withal of so hideous and formidable an aspect, that many persons, though assured of the wholesomeness and excellence of its flesh by the experience of others, can never bring themselves to taste it. The Spaniards themselves, even in the midst of their privations, on their first settling in St. Domingo, felt this repugnance; and the manner in which it was overcome is thus related by one of the historians of their early voyages to the New World:—"T hese serpents they cal iguanas, which our men learned (somewhat too late) to have been engendered in the islande. For unto that day none of them durst adventure to taste of them, by reason of their horrible deformity and loathsomness. Yet the lieutenant, being entised by the pleasantnesse of the kinges sister, determined to tast of the serpentes. But when he felt the fleshe thereof to bee so delicate to his tongue, hee fel to amaine without all feare; the which thing his companions perceiving, were not behind him in greedynesse, insomuch that they had nowe none other talke than of the sweetnesse of these serpentes, which they affirme to be of more pleasante taste than eyther our phesantes or partriches, but they lose

their taste except they be prepared after a certaine fashion, as doe pearshes and phesantes except they be interlarded before they be rosted."

Though no ferocious animals infest the West Indian Islands, and though there are no poisonous ones there, to invade the houses or endanger the lives of the inhabitants, a cause of torment equally diminutive and formidable is liable to assail them night and day. A similar one indeed exists more or less in all tropical regions of the world; and as it thus appertains as much to one country so situated as to another, I may properly enough speak concerning it in this place. When an inhabitant of Northern Europe is about to visit any of the countries lying in the neighbourhood of the equator, his imagination most likely dwells upon the perils and anxiety to which he will be exposed from the attacks and the vicinity of the tiger, the lion, the panther, and the serpent; but he soon discovers that he has an infinitely more formidable enemy to encounter in the most feeble and fragile of insects, the musquitoe. This little animal, wherever it exists in abundance, proves a deeper source of distress to the human species than tropical heat, disease, or confinement; and forms perhaps the greatest of all physical annoyances to which we can under any circumstances remain subjected for any considerable length of time. The common

gnat of Europe, though often complained of, is quite an insignificant tormentor compared with the genuine musquitoe, or *culex pipiens*, which is found only in the moist and warm parts of Africa, Asia, and America, and is largest and most virulent in the last continent. Judging from the accounts given by travellers in Norway and Lapland of their sufferings from the incessant attacks of this class of insects, we should feel inclined to believe that its worst species existed in the northern parts of Europe, but their description of the animal is sufficient to satisfy us that this would be a mistaken conclusion. The body of the Lapland musquitoe is encircled by black rings, while in the American and East and West Indian variety these are white or rather greyish.

Were it not for the protection of gauze curtains, the majority of Europeans in countries infested by musquitoes would never enjoy undisturbed sleep. A long residence in a hot climate does not, as is often supposed, render an individual proof against their attacks; but there are some persons whom they never assail, or who are totally insensible to the wounds which they inflict, which is probably the consequence of a particular thickness and opacity of the cuticle. Humboldt says that the Indians of the Oronoco, on lying down for the night, cover themselves

completely with sand, with the exception of their faces, as a defence from the musquitoes. In Brazil, the natives, as well as Europeans, for the same reason suspend their cots from the branches of trees ten or fifteen feet from the ground; for it is certain that these insects are in all situations most numerous and annoying close upon the surface of the soil, and the same remark applies to lakes and rivers. One of the Jesuit priests, in describing a voyage which he made up the Mississippi in a canoe, says that the musquitoes are so exquisitely tormenting there, that they cause people to lose temper and patience who had never lost these before; and Humboldt gives an account of a kind of ecclesiastical discipline practised in South America, of a singular and ingenious kind. When the superior of the missions of the Apure and Oronoco determines upon punishing any of his subordinates for want of zeal or irregularity of conduct, he sends him to form an establishment far in the interior of the country, and upon the banks of one of the above-named rivers, where his life is rendered miserable by the attacks of the swarms of musquitoes which (if I may use the expression) almost compose the atmosphere of these humid and woody regions.

In the West Indian Islands, musquitoes are more or less numerous according to the nature

of the soil and the vegetation, but they chiefly abound in the towns and upon the sea-coast. A house in the neighbourhood of Havana, in which I resided a short time, was so infested with them that its inmates were in the practice of getting up twice or thrice in the course of the night, and making a fire of damp chips of wood upon the stone floor of the principal apartment, in order that the clouds of pungent smoke might drive away the tormenting insects; which, however, was effected for an hour or two only, as they never failed to return to the place as soon as the cause of their retreat had disappeared. In the back settlements of America the inhabitants are obliged to adopt the same expedient during the day, and their log-huts are often so darkened with smoke that it is impossible to distinguish one individual from another.

In the northern parts of America the musquitoes are troublesome only three months in the year, otherwise the forests there would be uninhabitable; but, nevertheless, it is well known that intending settlers have in many instances been forced to abandon certain parts of the country by the persecutions of these insects; and it is probable that a large proportion of the flat swampy lands bordering upon the Mississippi will never be occupied or cultivated, from the same

cause. It seems not a little singular that musquitoes bred in woods and deserts, seldom, or perhaps never, visited by man, should have a voracious appetite for the blood of our species, and instantly attack the individual who happens to approach their haunts. Animal bodies of any kind, whether living or dead, are so far from constituting the natural food of this insect, that they actually are seldom found at all in those places where the species is engendered in the greatest multitudes.

History affords us many instances of the migrations of insects, or, at least, of some particular tribes of them being accidentally introduced into countries where they did not originally exist. The animalcula, which causes blight in wheat, was brought into England from abroad; and the sugar-ant, which made its first appearance in Grenada in 1790, and nearly destroyed all the cane-plantations there, is believed to have been imported in a vessel from Martinico. How does it happen that the *culex pipiens* has not yet made its appearance in Europe, or that the Lapland musquitoe has never been conveyed southward to more congenial regions? The moistness of the British climate would prove particularly favourable to the production and multiplication of musquitoes; and it is scarcely necessary to remark

that the cold would not destroy them, since their larvæ so well endure the rigours of the northern regions of our continent and of America.

The Dutch inhabitants of Cape Town assert that the musquitoe which now abounds there during the summer, was unknown in the colony till within these last twenty years; and they suppose that it has been introduced along with the cargoes of British vessels from India. The Dutch East India Company's ships were annually in the practice of touching at the Cape for a century before it fell into the hands of the English; but as they never left or landed any cargo there, the insects that might have been on board were not likely to be conveyed on shore.

Having said thus much of a noxious insect, I may be allowed to speak summarily of a harmless and elegant one, which is equally an inhabitant of the West Indian Islands, and which forms the nocturnal ornament of their forests and gardens. No sooner does the twilight disappear, than the fire-flies, or *cucuyos*, are seen darting and wheeling through the air like stars. One species emits a flash of white light at regular intervals of two or three seconds; while the other, or larger kind (*elater noctilacus*), displays two blazing spots of an emerald colour, and of unremitting brightness. The aborigines of His-

paniola are said to have employed the fire-flies of the latter sort to destroy the gnats and small insects which infested their huts, and also to give light in the evenings, both when they were at home, and when they went abroad. In the last case, they would tie several fire-flies to their toes, and be guided by their light during a journey through the darkest woods. In the present day, the poorer inhabitants of Cuba often use as a lantern a calabash pierced with small holes, and containing twelve or fifteen *cucuyos*. This affords sufficient light for all ordinary purposes; but it is necessary to shake the vessel occasionally, in order that the concussion may excite the insects to give out all their phosphorescence, which becomes feeble if they are allowed to remain long in a state of inactivity.

ABORIGINES OF THE WEST INDIES.

Mysterious chain of events! Inexplicable vicissitude of human affairs! The aborigines of the whole West Indian archipelago have long been utterly extinct, and we should in vain search even the deepest solitudes and the most secret recesses of its islands, whether great or small, for an individual of the race, or for one of his remotest descendants. And who have been permitted in succession to occupy the territories of these children of innocence and of nature? Sanguinary tyrants and remorseless seekers of gold; desperate and expatriated adventurers; piratical hordes insatiate after plunder, and regardless of laws human or divine; hostile and invading nations studying how to destroy each other; rapacious colonists, and a vast multitude of dependents in a state of personal slavery. Such are the triumphs of civilization! Such is the progress of human improvement!

It is true that a survey of the earth will fur-

nish us with many other examples of the extinction of an entire race of people; but though in many of them this may be as complete as it is in the instance in question, still, the collateral circumstances having no similarity, the impression produced is less startling and impressive. We know that every individual of the race of the ancient Egyptians has long since ceased to exist; but having the mixed descendants of that people before us, we are led to identify them as it were with their ancestors, and thus to fill up the blank in human society resulting from the disappearance of the latter. The extinction of the aborigines of the Canary Islands has been mentioned in a previous part of this work, and here the principle just stated equally applies; for the Canarians of the present day are not so unlike those of ancient times as to forbid our regarding them as partaking of the same descent. Humboldt discovered in the cavern of Ataruipe, in North America, the skeletons of six hundred Indians of an extinct race, and he describes the solemnity of his impressions upon the occasion; but even in this instance, the existing inhabitants of the country would present themselves to the mind as bearing some relationship to its former occupants, and as belonging to the same family of the human species.

But no link, real or imaginary, connects the extinct aborigines of the West Indian Islands with the living world there, or in any other place. On the contrary, we find their country inhabited by several races of foreigners, who have either come or been brought across the Atlantic Ocean, from lands several thousand miles distant; and no countenance or complexion that we meet throughout the whole archipelago possesses a single trait indicative of Caribbean progenitors. The likeness of its former numerous inhabitants does not now exist in the grand panorama of the human species; and the only physical memorial of them that remains, is the piles of their mouldering bones which are sometimes found in the caves and mountains of Cuba and Jamaica, where it is supposed the last of the race took refuge from the murderous hands of their oppressors, and perished from want and hunger.

The aborigines of the larger West Indian Islands having never received any general name, to avoid confusion and circumlocution, I will designate them Antilians, confining the appellation of Caribs exclusively to the race of cannibals who inhabited the eastern part of the archipelago. Columbus, in his first intercourse with the Antilians, seems to have been even less struck with the simplicity of their ideas and mode of life,

than astonished at the harmony and tranquillity which prevailed amongst them, and at the absence of all those domestic evils which continually affect the condition and disturb the happiness of the great mass of mankind in civilized countries. He was also captivated with their mildness of deportment and benevolent dispositions; and probably the more so because, having always observed the reverse of these qualities prevailing amongst the lower classes of society in Europe, he had supposed that they could not exist in any but a refined and educated community, and were incompatible with a state of nature and ignorance. In the journal of his first voyage, he everywhere speaks with enthusiasm of the happy condition and innocent lives of the Antilians, who, he says, are "unacquainted with evil, and inexperienced in the art of destroying each other, or of depriving any one of his liberty;" but it is at the same time painful to remark, that he had even from the first an eye to their prospective subjugation, for he often dwells upon their timidity, their want of arms, and their submissiveness; and hints that the conquest of the islands would be easy, and that a very small force would suffice to garrison them afterwards, and to retain the natives in obedience.

Peter Martyr, who writes from information derived from Columbus personally, says of the

Antilians—"And surely, if they had received our religion, I would think their life most happie of all menne, if they might therewith enjoy their aunciente libertie. A few things content them, having no delight in such superfluities for the which in other places menne take infinite paynes, and commit manie unlawfull actes, and yet never are satisfied, whereas manie have too much, and none enough. But among these simple souls, a few clothes serve the naked, weightes and measures are not needfulle to such as cannot skill of crafte or deceite, and have not the use of pestiferous money, the seed of innumerable mischieves; so that, if we shall not bee ashamed to confesse the truth, they seem to live in that golden worlde, of the which old writers speake so much, wherein man lived simply and innocently without enforcement of lawes, without quarreling, judges, and libelles; content onely to satisfie nature, without further vexation for knowledge of things to come."

We may easily suppose that Columbus's natural penetration enabled him to foresee the ills which his discoveries were to entail upon the Antilians; but policy would at first prevent his making any allusion of the kind, and various circumstances afterwards forced him to overlook or connive at the oppressions and cruelties prac-

tised upon them by the colonists, whom he was the means of introducing into their territories. It is impossible to believe that he was not humane and compassionate in his nature, and that the severities with which he himself treated the natives of St. Domingo were repugnant to his principles and condemned by his conscience; but doubtless they appeared to him to be requisite to secure the conquest of the country, and the tranquillity and personal safety of the Spaniards, who were forming their first settlements there. However, Navarette, on the authority of Las Casas, accuses the admiral of being the original author of that system of tyranny, injustice, and oppression, which so rapidly depopulated the West Indian archipelago. After mentioning various instances in which the aborigines of St. Domingo were massacred, or condemned to slavery, or carried off the island, by order of Columbus, he cites a passage, in which the archbishop asserts that the sufferings and disappointments which the former underwent during the last years of his life were inflicted by Heaven as a punishment for the cruelty and injustice which he had exercised towards the inhabitants of the New World.

Columbus's exculpation must be found, not in a denial of the facts alleged against him, but in

duly considering the difficulties of his situation, and his responsibility to the court of Spain. The returns drawn from the West Indies, either by trade or in revenue, had not nearly paid the expenses of conquest and colonization; and the avaricious Ferdinand, already dissatisfied with the unproductiveness of the New World, eagerly listened to the accusations which were brought against its discoverer by his numerous enemies at home and abroad. Had Columbus, when he returned to St. Domingo, and assumed the government of that island, immediately sent large quantities of gold to Spain, neither Bovadilla, nor any other person, would have been appointed to supersede him, or to inquire into his conduct. But before this occurred, he was aware of the discontent of Ferdinand and of its causes, and perceived the danger and criticalness of his own situation; and his only resource to save his credit, and to insure a continuance of the royal favour, was to ship a valuable cargo to Spain, and thus purchase the forbearance and good opinion of its monarch. The companions of Columbus were too indolent to assist him in this by their own labour and exertions; and he found that there was no way of procuring the requisite supplies of gold and of other productions of the country, except by extorting them from the natives, and by

robbing and chastising all those who refused to comply with his demands. Thus, to preserve himself in power and authority, he sacrificed the nobleness of his nature, and stifled the voice of conscience and humanity. The Antilians were plundered, forced to labour, and driven to desperation; and thousands perished in contests with the Spaniards appointed to collect the tribute which had been unjustifiably imposed upon them. The colonists, seeing that these excesses and acts of rapacity were permitted by their governor, considered themselves authorised to commit still greater ones; and Hispaniola became a scene of outrage and bloodshed, in which the sufferers could find no eye to pity and no hand to save them. In the midst of this, Bovadilla arrived, and by his orders Columbus and his brother were loaded with chains, and sent to Spain to answer for their misdeeds. "Is it astonishing," demands Las Casas, "that all the misfortunes which Don Fernando describes should befall the admiral and his adherents; and that the elements, the heavens, and everything which they contain, should conspire against men who had visited with irreparable injuries, and oppressed with the most detestable wrongs and the cruellest injustice, an innocent race of people who had never done them the least evil?"

It is probable that Columbus considered the enforcement of the Indians to work in the mines as merely a temporary measure, which the necessities of his situation demanded that he should resort to, and which was to be discontinued as soon as he had collected the requisite quantity of gold for transmission to Spain, and had firmly established himself in his government. His sudden removal from Hispaniola, and his subsequent exclusion from all offices of authority and jurisdiction connected with the New World, prevent our verifying these conjectures, or knowing with certainty what his real sentiments were in reference to the natives of America. But it is probable that his estimate of them was much influenced by the prejudices of the times, and that he regarded all infidels as unworthy of sympathy or consideration, and as the exclusive property of the Christians who might happen to invade their country. For it must be recollected that it was not till forty-four years posterior to his first voyage, that Pope Paul III. promulgated his celebrated bull, declaring the Indians to be *men*, and that they were entitled to the common privileges of humanity.

But though we are constrained to admit, that circumstances (not natural inclination) rendered Columbus the first oppressor of the Antilians, it

would be unfair to consider him the author of that system of cruelty to which the aborigines of America were afterwards subjected whenever they fell under the domination of the Spaniards. The natural character of the latter was such, that they required no example, either illustrious or humble, to incite them to become oppressors and tyrants when the people whom they had conquered happened to follow a mode of life and a code of belief different from their own. Bigots in religion, encased in national prejudices, contemning foreigners, and obstinately proud and intolerant, they considered themselves privileged to be despots, and invested with a right to despise and overthrow whatever they disliked, and to destroy whoever opposed them. These qualities led to their successes, as well as to their crimes; and if it is probable that no other nation in Europe would have ravaged America so wantonly as they did, it is certain that no other nation would have overrun and conquered it with so much boldness and rapidity.

Much uncertainty exists with respect to what was the amount of the population of the West Indian archipelago at the time that Columbus discovered it. This is a point on which even the Spaniards used to contradict themselves; for when they wished to magnify the importance of their

conquests, they described the Antilians as being exceedingly numerous, and when they had in view the concealment of their cruelty and their massacres, they insisted that these people were no more than detached and wandering tribes, alike barbarous and inconsiderable; but putting aside the testimony of historians, and grounding our estimate of the probable population of the islands upon their physical character, we shall be led to believe that they were very thickly inhabited. Cuba, Jamaica, and Hispaniola yielded the plantain and the maize in abundance, and both of these vegetables were extensively cultivated by the natives, and they are of all articles of human food the most productive and most easily raised; neither are their crops liable to failure; and the agricultural operations required to obtain them are so insignificant, that indolence itself would find them an amusement rather than a labour. The aversion of the Antilians to bodily exertion could, therefore, never have stood in the way of their having plentiful supplies of food, in the use of which it appears that they were very moderate; for nothing astonished them more than the inordinate appetites of their invaders, and to avoid the task of entertaining them as guests, they seldom failed to remove to a distance from their settlements shortly after these had been

formed. This circumstance accounts for the privations to which the Spaniards were so often exposed in Cuba and Hispaniola from the want of the necessaries of life, which the Antilians were in the habit of raising in sufficient quantities for themselves only, instead of labouring to obtain that surplus which the fertility of their islands was so well calculated to afford, but which their inhabitants had no inducement whatever to secure either for their own use or for that of others. If we consider that, in addition to the maize and plantain, the Antilians had cassava root, and fruits, and fish, for their subsistence, we shall find that their circumstances were favourable to a rapid increase of population, which was never checked or diminished by war or contagious diseases, or by any other local cause, except the incursions of the Caribs who inhabited the chain of smaller islands to the eastward, and used to make descents upon the coasts of the Antilians, for the purpose of taking them prisoners, and afterwards killing and devouring them ; however, the number of their victims must have been very inconsiderable, for the canoes which they employed in these hostile expeditions were too small to be capable of transporting many captives across the ocean. Cuba, Hispaniola, and Jamaica were, when discovered by Columbus, perhaps as popu-

lous as Java and Sumatra are in the present day, which they a good deal resemble in their physical character, except that rice is not indigenous in them, but, as a basis of human subsistence, the maize far surpasses it, whether we consider its nutritive qualities or its productiveness.

In taking a general view of the Antilians, we are forcibly struck with the absence of all prominent traits and distinctive peculiarities in their national character. We are neither astonished by customs and observances of a fantastic and unaccountable nature, nor shocked by atrocious or revolting prejudices. Good sense, benevolence, and an engaging simplicity, were everywhere conspicuous in their ideas, habits, and mode of life; and we seek in vain in their history, and in the accounts which we have of their condition, for those mutual acts of violence and aggression, and those causes of endless discord, which are almost universal amongst mankind, but which some writers of no mean authority would erroneously have us believe to be inseparable from uncivilized life, and its perpetual and essential characteristics. All the early voyagers agree in eulogizing the Antilians; and it is singular and worthy of remark, that those very Spaniards who treated them with such inhuman cruelty should never have attempted its palliation by calumniat-

ing the nation upon whom it was exercised, as has always been a favourite practice of European invaders under similar circumstances.

The Antilians had made but small advances in the arts of life when their country was discovered by Europeans, the mildness and equability of their climate enabling them to dispense with almost everything which nature had not provided for their use. They lived in huts composed of the branches of trees, and thatched with weeds or grass; and some of their buildings were of considerable dimensions, and were used for public meetings. The domestic utensils of the Antilians were composed of a rude kind of pottery; and they had the art of fashioning native gold into plates of different shapes and sizes, which they wore as ornaments. It was the fatal display of these that brought upon them all their calamities; for had Columbus observed no gold amongst them, he would doubtless have continued to sail westward to the bottom of the Gulf of Mexico, and would perhaps have achieved the conquest of that kingdom thirty years before it was accomplished by the daring Cortez. The Antilians manufactured from their native cotton a cloth of a coarse texture, and also fishing-nets and other trifles of simple fabric. Their food consisted chiefly of maize, mandioc, yams, fish,

and of the various wild fruits with which the island abounded; but their principal luxury and most esteemed article of diet was the iguana lizard, which has already been described, and in the dressing of which they employed much care and nicety.

The religion of the Antilians was remarkable for the simplicity of its dogmas, and of its ceremonials and observances. They believed in the existence of one supreme being, dependent upon whom was a number of inferior deities, called Zemes, who controlled the elements and regulated the fortunes of men. The Antilians made images of these Zemes, and often carried them about their persons, but it does not appear that they paid them any kind of homage or worship, or attributed to them a definite protecting power; for Columbus, in the journal of his first voyage, repeatedly assures Ferdinand and Isabella that the inhabitants of the islands are not idolaters, and that it would be very easy to convert them to the Catholic faith. That they entertained the doctrine of the immortality of the soul is sufficiently proved by the speech which one of the caciques of Cuba addressed to Columbus on his landing there, but which the latter did not comprehend at the time, nor until it was explained by one of the Indians whom he carried to Spain,

and who eventually acquired the language of that country, and qualified himself to be an interpreter.

The cacique in question told the admiral, that he knew not whether he and his followers belonged to heaven or to the earth, or what their intentions were in visiting his territories, but that they must undoubtedly be aware that those who wantonly injured their fellow-creatures in this world would suffer punishment for their misdeeds in the next, and that therefore he hoped he had nothing to apprehend at their hands, either as regarded himself or his subjects and countrymen. It is somewhat curious that, about the day on which this remarkable address must have been delivered, Columbus notes in his journal that he has observed a point of land well calculated for the site of a fortress, and that a very small garrison of soldiers would suffice to keep the natives of the island in subjection. Nevertheless, he lost no opportunity of assuring these simple people, that he came amongst them solely for the purpose of diffusing the blessings of Christianity, and protecting them from the incursions and rapacity of the cannibals. But though he must have foreseen the sorrow and suffering and servitude which his discoveries were to entail upon the Antilians and their latest posterity, he was obliged to ad-

dress them in the language of policy and deception, in order to facilitate his progress through the New World, and to encourage its inhabitants to deliver up all their gold, and to instruct him where he could obtain more.

The Caribs, whom Columbus found inhabiting the smaller islands of the archipelago, were dissimilar to the Antilians in many respects, and certainly formed a different race of men, inferior to the latter in virtue and humanity, but surpassing them in courage and physical powers, and perhaps in intelligence. They at all times offered a determined resistance to their European invaders; and their brothers in misfortune, the Antilians, were nearly exterminated before they began to experience the devastating influence of foreign domination. It is true that the Caribbean Islands, owing to their barrenness, and their want of gold-mines, were not taken possession of by Europeans till many years after they had been discovered; but, nevertheless, their inhabitants defended themselves with a degree of vigour and effect which much retarded the conquest of their territories, and which caused many losses and embarrassments to the invaders, whether Spanish, French, or English.

The Caribs were universally addicted to cannibalism; but it would appear that this odious prac-

tice had not that unfavourable influence upon their character which might have been expected. Towards each other they were meek and benevolent, fulfilling all the principal duties of domestic life, and never displaying any ferocity of disposition except while attacking, capturing, and feasting upon the Antilians, of whom they ate the men only, reserving the grown females for slaves and companions, and rearing the children of the same sex with all the care and kindness that they were accustomed to bestow upon their own offspring. A few Carib families, forming an independent tribe, existed in the island of St. Vincent towards the end of the last century. They are now extinct, and we have no longer a single living remnant of the three millions of individuals who, little more than three centuries ago, peopled the West Indian archipelago.

EUROPEAN SOCIETY IN THE WEST INDIES.

No islands in the world have been so often the sport of conquest, or have caused so much political dissension, or have so often changed their masters, as those of the West Indian archipelago. The fortunes and circumstances of their inhabitants have consequently been in a state of perpetual fluctuation, as well as their laws and forms of government, whether of local origin or imposed by the mother country. To describe the hostilities of which the West Indian archipelago has at different times been a theatre, to enumerate the repeated capturing and recapturing of its various islands by foreign powers, and to offer an account of the endless treaties, stipulations, and political acts to which the above events have given rise, would be a monotonous and uninstructive task, which happily does not fall within the scope of the present work, which is intended to represent men in their social and domestic character, and not in that of soldiers and politicians.

The first Europeans who settled in the West Indies were thirty-eight men left in Hispaniola by Columbus, when he was about to return homewards to communicate the successful result of his first voyage to the court of Spain. He furnished these people with everything necessary for their convenience and security, such as provisions, arms, and implements of different kinds; and recommended them to the protection of the cacique in whose territories they were to fix their abode, and who had from the first shown a strong partiality for the society of Christians. Of the subsequent history of this infant colony we know little or nothing. When Columbus was approaching the place on his second voyage, several of his crew happening to go on shore, found two dead bodies lying upon the beach, one of which was observed to have a long beard. This peculiarity satisfied them that the corpse was that of a Spaniard, and they began to form unfavourable auguries respecting the fate of their countrymen, which were soon verified; for on reaching the spot which had been chosen for their settlement, they found it deserted, and the houses burnt, and the ground strewed with fragments of wearing apparel and other articles of European manufacture. The Indians in the neighbourhood gave a confused and contradictory account of the disappearance of

the Christians, but agreed in asserting that they were all dead. It is probable that the greater part of them fell victims to the just vengeance of the natives, rendered desperate by their tyranny and excesses, and encouraged to resistance by the hope, that from the long interval which had elapsed since the departure of Columbus, neither he nor any of his companions would ever revisit Hispaniola.

The destroyed colony was speedily re-established upon a much greater scale than before, though in a different part of the island; and the brother of Columbus was placed at the head of it. About twelve hundred persons, most of them soldiers, formed a settlement at a port named Isabella, and proceeded to build a town there, and ere long the spirit of destruction began to exercise itself, and the Antilians perished rapidly under the relentless dominion of the colonists, now rendered invincible by their numbers, and by the possession of horses, artillery, and blood-hounds. We have no information respecting the social condition of the Spaniards at this period, or even up to a much later one; but it is easy to conjecture what it must have been. We well know that in the present day, when a body of emigrants land in the country where they propose to form a settlement, they are liable to abandon themselves to indolence and

to all kinds of irregularities, and to resist interference or control, though their respective labours and duties may be laid down and placed before their eyes in the most obvious and definite manner. And how much less was a spirit of subordination or industry to be expected from the Spaniards who resorted to Hispaniola with the view of residing there? Instead of arriving with the impression that they should have to commence their career by building houses, cutting down forests, tilling the soil, and attending to self-preservation from wild beasts and savages, they anticipated a total exemption from work, the attendance of slaves, and the immediate enjoyment of all the necessaries and conveniencies of life. Inflamed by these expectations, and by that buoyancy and unruliness of disposition which formed at that time one of the most remarkable traits of their national character, they were neither disposed to listen to the voice of reason nor to acknowledge the power of their superiors. To settle quietly in one place, and to pursue any regular occupation, was in their eyes a mark of an humble and abject spirit; and every one of them aspired to conduct or at least share in some daring enterprise; and if such objects were unattainable, still it seemed to them better to wander about the country in search of masses of gold at the risk of

their lives, than to labour for the means of subsistence. Having no wives or families to retain them at home, or give them a taste for domestic life, they felt as happy in one place as in another; and viewing the Antilians as a bestial and a pagan race, they forcibly made use of their persons and their property to supply their wants and minister to their convenience.

We may suppose that the settlement at Isabella, though called a town by the Spanish historians, did not merit an appellation of the kind till long after its foundation, and consisted at first merely of a collection of huts such as the natives were accustomed to build; for the colonists were too proud and indolent to engage in any kind of manual labour, even when their personal interest and convenience were concerned. Martyr says that gardens were made in the neighbourhood of Isabella, and that in them all kinds of European vegetables grew with rapidity and attained perfection, and that European cattle and poultry throve and increased there in an extraordinary manner; from whence we may judge of the unparalleled inactivity of the Spaniards, who were often nearly perishing of hunger in a region so fertile and productive, and which they were eventually obliged to abandon, partly indeed on account of its unhealthiness, but chiefly because they had

impoverished the country and frightened away the inhabitants, upon whose labour they had depended for subsistence. Herrera gives a frightful account of the mortality and distress of the colonists at Isabella from famine and disease, and describes an apparition of seven individuals, which, according to report, haunted the spot after it was deserted.

Spanish society in the West Indies could not have assumed any regular or consistent character for a long period subsequent to the settlement of the country. The scenes of plunder, enterprise, and danger, in which the majority of the colonists were incessantly engaged, were calculated to indispose them for the calm pleasures of domestic life and the cultivation of the understanding, while the means of doing the latter were quite unattainable had they even been inclined to seek them. It was not the policy of the Spanish government at that time to diffuse knowledge amongst its subjects; and the exportation of books to the colonies was, doubtless, either discouraged or prohibited. In 1497, however, we find that it was authorised that some music and musical instruments should be sent from Spain for the amusement of the settlers in the West Indies; and, not long afterwards, jewellers, who had at first been forbidden to exercise their profession

in these colonies, were allowed to do so publicly for the convenience of the inhabitants, which shows that plate for domestic use was beginning to be in demand. It is probably about this time that the colonists of the better class began to bring their wives with them, whose presence could not fail to have great influence in humanising a society of adventurers, who, in the midst of their excesses, affected to retain that chivalric adoration of the sex which existed amongst their countrymen at home.

It seems probable that the city of Sevilla Nueva in Jamaica, founded by Esquiral in 1510, was at that period more distinguished for its opulence and splendour than any other Spanish settlement in the West Indies; but it is singular that history is nearly silent in regard to this subject; and our conjectures must rest chiefly upon the magnitude of the ruins that once existed upon the spot where the town was formerly situated. When the English took possession of the island, they found the remains of a variety of buildings. The most perfect of these was part of a cathedral of large dimensions, two miles from which the fragments of a pavement were discovered, which renders it probable that Sevilla Nueva was a place of great extent. Yet, in 1655, the Spanish inhabitants of Jamaica amounted to twelve or fourteen

hundred only, and consisted chiefly of scattered planters living in a state of poverty; and we are therefore led to inquire into the causes of its depopulation, and of the total abandonment of Sevilla Nueva. Bryan Edwards says that there is an ancient tradition existing in the island, that the Spaniards suddenly fell victims to a general conspiracy of the Indians, who were driven to desperation by the cruelty of their invaders. But Bridges attributes the desertion of Sevilla Nueva to the fear which its inhabitants entertained of the buccaneers, who had begun to infest the West Indian seas, and who, according to him, attacked the city in 1554, and rased it to the ground. But the mere removal of the settlers to a different part of the island would not have caused such a diminution of their number as to reduce them to that miserable remnant which the English found there when they captured it in 1655; and it appears to me that the only satisfactory way in which we can explain the depopulation of Jamaica, is to give credit to the tradition of the natives having on a particular occasion massacred a large proportion of the Spaniards.

But, uninformed as we are in respect to the domestic economy and private mode of life which were followed by the wealthier Spanish inhabitants of the cities of San Domingo, Sevilla Nueva,

St. Jago, and other establishments of a similar kind, we may safely conclude that they found a residence in the West Indies to be congenial to their dispositions, and attended with many advantages and delights. The final expulsion of the Moors from Spain had given an impetus to the national character which was highly favourable to colonization; besides this, many families of distinction, having been reduced to poverty and insignificance during the subjugation of their country, were glad to find a way of repairing their shattered fortunes by removing to the Indies. Thus the spirited adventurer and the needy hidalgo alike found a congenial place of resort in Hispaniola, which continued long after its discovery to be the centre of attraction to emigrants. "For as much," says Martyr, "as it is the heade and as it were the principle marte of all the liberality of the ocean, and hath a thousande and again a thousande faire, pleasant, beautifull, and rich neriedes whiche lye about it on every side, adorning this their lady and mother as it were another Tethis, the wyfe of Neptunus, envyroning her about and attending upon her as their queen and patronesse." The Spaniards being naturally an imaginative people and lovers of the marvellous and surprising, we may easily conceive what a vivid interest they felt in the progress of the dis-

coveries which were continually going on around them. The field was in all appearance boundless, while extensive geographical knowledge did not then (as it does now) sober the expectations of men, and teach them that Nature in all places observes the same general laws, and that she nowhere trespasses certain bounds, nor is fertile beyond a certain point, either in yielding treasures or producing novelties.

The minds of the Spaniards residing in Hispaniola were doubtless kept in a state of constant excitement by the departure and arrival of the various expeditions of discovery that were undertaken by their countrymen. The probable success or failure of these, the results of former ones, and the estimate of others that were in perspective, engaged their attention by turns, and formed almost their sole subjects of conversation. When a ship was announced to be in view, curiosity and impatience agitated every breast and unloosed every tongue; and her commander and crew had no sooner landed, than they were assailed with questions, and solicited to display the wealth which they had acquired, and describe the wonders which they had observed in the course of their voyage. When King Ferdinand demanded of Columbus why so little gold was sent to Spain, seeing that it abounded so much in

the islands, the admiral replied that the cause lay in the idleness of the Spaniards there, "who loved news and sedition better than labour and quietness;" and such was doubtless the truth; nor is it astonishing that these men should have often neglected their business with the view of assembling together under the groves of Hispaniola, and amusing their fancies by talking of recent or past events, such as the expedition of Ponce de Leon in search of the fountain of life; the mass of gold worth eighty thousand pesos which Francis Garay found in a brook; the Amazons reported to dwell in the island of Martinique; the extraordinary animals of the New World; or the miracles often wrought in favour of their countrymen by the Holy Virgin during their battles with the Indians.

When we reflect upon the number of Spaniards that emigrated to the West Indian archipelago, the various establishments which they formed there, and the complete supremacy which they acquired by the extermination of the natives, we feel astonished that their settlements and their power should have had so little permanence and stability, and that the remains of them should be so few and inconsiderable in the present day. But to explain this, it is merely necessary to remember that these conquerors during the early part of

their career had nothing in view but the acquisition of gold; and that they alike neglected and despised agriculture and commerce, and all those pursuits and occupations which are calculated to attach men to the soil which they inhabit, and lead them to form the nucleus of a social community which shall contain within itself the principles of cohesion and future aggrandisement.

The towns of Navidad, Isabella, and San Domingo, in Hispaniola, and of Sevilla Nueva and St. Jago in Jamaica, became insignificant not long after their foundation, and even the ruins of several of them are now scarcely discoverable. Of all the early Spanish establishments, Havana is the only one which has acquired importance, and this has been within half a century only, when Spain first began to allow to Cuba a partial enjoyment of that free trade which is almost everywhere the basis of colonial prosperity. Seeing then that Havana was founded so far back as 1515, and that it had no foreign intercourse till the end of the last century, we may conclude that the ideas and mode of life of its inhabitants at the latter period bore a strong resemblance to those of the early Spanish residents of the West Indian Islands, with the exception of the slight influence upon either, which the introduction of negro slaves

to replace the extirpated Antilians might have produced.

When the French traveller De Menonville arrived in Havana in 1777, he announced that he was a botanist, and had come to Cuba for the purpose of herborizing; the official gentleman who was examining his passport asked him if there were no plants in his own country? a question which recalls one of a similar tenor which a negro addressed to Park, after the latter had been pressing him for information respecting the Niger —"Have you no rivers in your native land that you travel so far to see those of Africa?" And certainly the negro showed less dulness of apprehension than the Spaniard; for as all rivers bear a strong general resemblance to each other except in magnitude, there was nothing unnatural in the idea, that to have seen those of one country was sufficient to satisfy any man's curiosity; but as most of the plants of the same region differ notably from each other in qualities and external appearance, it required little reflection to conceive that those belonging to separate countries were likely to do so in a still greater degree.

At this time it appears that the Havanese felt no interest in any country except Cuba, and cultivated no kind of knowledge or pursuit that was not, if I may use the expression—indigenous, to

their own city. The gentlemen amused themselves with pleasure-gardening, and with the superintendence, more or less direct, of their sugar or coffee plantations, provided these were not very distant; while the females of the better class spent their time entirely within doors, except when they went to mass, or took an airing in their volantos in the evening. The houses of even the most wealthy persons were remarkable for the simplicity of their furniture and decorations; and their inmates lived in a moderate and sober manner, unacquainted with European luxuries and refinements. An opera was occasionally exhibited, and the actors were efficient and respectable, though the pieces which they performed had no pretensions to merit of any kind. "The comedia which succeeded the opera," says De Menonville, "was of a singular description; a single actor kills a dozen of men, women, and children, without the slightest resistance on their parts, and ranges them in a row as he stabs them; the work complete, he calmly wipes his dagger upon the upper leather of his shoe; this scene, so strange is the depravity of Spanish taste, was regarded as very fine."

The inhabitants of Havana made rapid advances in knowledge and civilization in the beginning of the present century; for Spain having for some time previous been obliged to relax

many of those restrictions with which she had long fettered her colonies, the Cubanians took every advantage of so favourable a circumstance, and began to import foreign ideas as well as foreign merchandise. Books were introduced into Havana, newspapers established, and the publication of statistical information permitted; and many of its wealthier inhabitants sailed for Europe, and travelled in Spain, France, and Italy, and afterwards returned to their native island, to polish and enlighten their countrymen. The leading circles of Havana, (according to Humboldt) resemble in the elegance and politeness of their manners those of the richest mercantile towns of Europe; and the city was at the time of his visit the seat of an university, including professorships of theology, jurisprudence, medicine, mathematics, political economy, &c. and also of a public library, a botanical garden, and a free school for the study of the fine arts.

This traveller, indeed, informs us, that the cultivation of knowledge was exclusively confined to Havana itself; and that the Spanish residents of the smaller towns and of the country were deplorably ignorant, and still retained their ancient prejudices.

However, the reception which he met with at Trinidad, a port in Cuba, proves that its inha-

bitants were at least sensible of his merits, and that they had liberality enough to venerate talents and knowledge even in a foreigner. Humboldt, and his companion Bonpland, having landed from a coasting vessel four miles from Trinidad, were about to proceed there on foot, when a party of retail merchants, who happened to be travelling in the same direction, offered them the use of a horse, and desired them to mount and ride double. The two illustrious philosophers good-humouredly complied, and advanced in this manner to their place of destination. But their departure from Trinidad was in a very different style; for the corporation of the place, anxious to do them honour, conducted them to the seashore in a handsome carriage, while an ecclesiastic, dressed in a suit of velvet, pronounced a poem in celebration of their adventurous voyage up the river Oronoco.

A little anecdote sometimes does more to explain the character and condition of a people than the most laboured details. The delivery of the complimentary poem is not a trait of modern society, but belongs to the courtly and figurative style of Spanish manners in the sixteenth century.

Though Cuba maintained an unshaken fidelity to Spain during the South American revolution,

she nevertheless profited indirectly by the diffusion of new ideas and liberal opinions which resulted from that event; while the mother-country found it prudent to encourage and confirm her obedience and attachment by granting her various privileges, and an extension of freedom which had hitherto been withheld. But the adherence of Cuba to Spain will not be so favourable to the perpetuation amongst her inhabitants of the national customs and ideas of the latter country as might be supposed; for the foreign trade of Havana is not only immense, but a multitude of English and American, and likewise some French merchants, have taken up their abode there, and are exerting a gradual influence upon its native society, and introducing the habits and prejudices of their respective countries. Of nine hundred large vessels which annually enter the port, not more than two hundred come from Spain; so that this vast preponderance of foreign intercourse and foreign importation must powerfully tend to withdraw the attention of the people from their local manners and usages, and lead to the gradual admixture of these with others not indigenous to the country. It is true that few of the foreigners resident in Havana, and none of the nautical persons who frequent it, are admitted into the higher circles of Spanish society there; but their influ-

ence is communicated even to that class through a variety of indirect channels, while the articles of luxury and convenience which they bring for sale, the mode of life which they follow, and their personal importance in a commercial point of view, draw upon them some degree of attention from all quarters, whether high or low. Even the interior of Cuba is subject to this kind of foreign influence, the government having lately sold considerable tracts of land to emigrants from Europe and America, with a view of increasing the white population of the island. Between the years 1815 and 1820, several thousand individuals had settled in the neighbourhood of Matanyas and Guibara, of whom not more than a tenth part were Spaniards or Spanish Americans, the grand majority being natives of Great Britain, of France, and of the United States. Perhaps it is not going too far to say, that the traveller who a century hence may wish to observe the national prejudices and manners of Spain as they exist in America, will seek them in vain in her colonies in that quarter of the world, and will recognise them only in the heart of certain independent republics, which had more than a hundred years before renounced their allegiance to her, and withdrawn themselves from her sway.

Having thus given a general view of the rise and progress of the Spanish colonies in the West Indies, the like remains to be done with respect to the origin of the British settlements in the same quarter of the world. Some English adventurers established themselves in St. Christopher's and Barbadoes so early as 1620; but as their numbers were inconsiderable, and as they held their possessions on a very precarious tenure, and were often molested by the Spaniards, the commencement of British power and influence in the West Indies ought to be dated from the capture of Jamaica by Penn and Venables in 1655. This expedition has been viewed in different lights by different historians, and it is perhaps more easy to condemn than to justify it. At the time that it took place, the English and the Spanish nations were at peace, and an ambassador from the court of the latter was residing in London. Nevertheless, the usurper Cromwell, who was then at the head of affairs, despatched a fleet, carrying a large body of troops, with secret orders to attack the Spanish possessions in the West Indies. This expedition, fitted out in open violation of an existing treaty, first attempted the conquest of Hispaniola, but being repulsed with disgrace, it turned upon Jamaica, and captured that island, not without difficulty,

though its whole white population amounted to only twelve or fourteen hundred individuals.

The partisans of Cromwell endeavoured to justify these proceedings, on the ground that the Spaniards in the West Indies had long been in the habit of treating with excessive rigour and cruelty those British subjects that happened to fall in their way, either by sea or land, and that they had arrogated to themselves the exclusive right of navigating the American Ocean, and trading upon its coasts and islands. But why were not representations of this kind first made to the court of Spain through its ambassador at London, and had satisfaction been refused, the fleet might then have justifiably been despatched on its hostile mission? Cromwell, or his advisers, doubtless well knew that the Spanish government would have replied by enumerating the outrages which her own subjects were daily receiving from those of the British nation, who, leagued with the French and Dutch, under the name of Buccaneers, had begun to pursue a system of unsparing and indiscriminate piracy. It is true that the Spaniards in the West Indies tortured and put to death many Europeans who had at different times been captured by their *guarda-costas;* however, it is but fair to state, in palliation of these acts of violence, that no nation in the world was ever

more irritated, distressed, and annoyed by the incessant though petty warfare of interlopers and depredators from all countries. The outcasts and vagabonds of Europe found a congenial sphere of action in the West Indian seas, and the Spaniards and their possessions were selected by them as common objects of plunder, whether by force or by stratagem, and alike in peace and in war. To have appealed for redress to the cabinets at home would have been a vain effort; and there remained no alternative but the extermination or the enslaving of the pirates, both of which plans were resorted to and in their execution, as may be supposed, the innocent often suffered as well as the guilty. It is likely that the Protector was sensible that he had no just cause of resentment or complaint against the Spanish nation, and that one of his principal reasons for undertaking the hostile expedition against their West Indian possessions was the opportunity which it afforded him of sending abroad and getting rid of people who were disaffected towards his person, and who might secretly have conspired to overthrow his government.

The troops employed in Cromwell's West Indian expedition were intended first to conquer the islands, and afterwards to settle them; and the persons selected for this double duty were, in

accordance with the system of colonization usually adopted by European governments, the refuse of society, and the surplus population of gaols and penitentiaries. These soldiers of fortune were permitted and even encouraged to carry their wives with them, and a considerable number of females embarked in the fleet. The disasters which attended the attack upon Hispaniola, and the feebleness and timidity which the troops exhibited in the capture of Jamaica, were such as might have been expected, from the materials of which the invading force was composed. But inefficient as these were as soldiers, they proved to be still more so in the character of settlers and agriculturists. After the partial evacuation of Jamaica by the Spaniards, the British troops were disbanded, and lands were assigned them for cultivation; but they preferred idleness to industry, though famine was before their eyes, and though they were aware that she would remain in the island until expelled by their personal exertions. Their indolence was carried to such a degree, that they could not even be prevailed upon to work at the fortifications which were intended for their own defence; and these were erected chiefly by the seamen who belonged to the fleet, and who, being in a state of subordination, were the only useful and available persons in the new colony. At first the soldiery

supported themselves tolerably well by killing the wild cattle and hogs, with which the island abounded; but these animals at length becoming scarce and shy, the want of food was severely felt, and the more so because disease began to enfeeble a large proportion of the settlers, who, being no longer able to hunt for their own subsistence, were either maintained by the charity of their companions, or allowed to die from want of proper treatment and attendance.

And here it is impossible to reflect without satisfaction, that Jamaica was at this time destitute of aboriginal inhabitants, and of every kind of uncivilised population, except a few hundred Maroon negroes who roamed through the woods. Had it been otherwise, what scenes of tyranny and outrage would have marked the early history of the settlement! How relentlessly would the gentle Antilians have been dealt with by a profligate soldiery, familiarised to crime and infuriated by famine! Gloomy and repulsive as the picture of the commencement of the colony is, it would have presented much darker shades, had there occurred the collision of the weak and the strong, and the hostile state of the oppressor and the oppressed, such as followed the conquest of the island by the Spaniards, and continued till they had converted it into a desert and a solitude.

In the course of a few years, though not till after great mortality had taken place amongst the colonists, the British settlement in Jamaica assumed a promising and consistent form. The wise administration of one of its first governors, Colonel D'Oyley, the increase of its population from the frequent arrival of new emigrants of a respectable kind, the natural fertility of the island, and the free trade which it was allowed to enjoy, were the chief causes of its early prosperity. Ere long, too, its ports became favourite places of resort with the Buccaneers, when they planned their expeditions or returned from the execution of them. These maritime adventurers acquired prodigious wealth by their depredations, and they lavished it with boundless and fantastic prodigality; and Jamaica soon overflowed with specie, and became the depôt of immense treasures of every description. From that time the island has continued to increase in population, and to extend its trade; though its history has all along been a turbulent one, owing to a variety of causes, such as foreign invasion, or the dread of it, political discord at home, oppression, real or imaginary, by the parent country, civil warfare with revolted slaves, and physical distress from the convulsions of nature. But as it is not the province of this work to record these events in detail, I will pro-

ceed without farther delay to make some remarks upon the social and domestic condition of the inhabitants of the British West Indies.

Though most of the adventurers who first settled in Jamaica were persons of low origin and profligate habits, it was not long before many emigrants of a superior description began to flock to the island. The political troubles and dissensions in which the British nation was involved during the middle of the seventeenth century, induced many respectable families to seek an asylum abroad, and not a few of these chose Jamaica or Barbadoes for their homes; and, bringing with them cultivated manners and liberal ideas, they formed communities of a grade and character which are never to be found in the new colonies of any nation in the present day. Nor did their change of condition lead to that degeneration of manners which usually attends the removal of men accustomed to the conveniencies of civilized life to a sphere in which these do not exist, and where objects of absolute necessity must at first engage their minds, to the exclusion of those of ornament or mere agreeableness. For the planters had their estates cultivated by slaves, whose labours they merely superintended, instead of participating in them, and thus they enjoyed

perhaps more leisure than they had done in their native country; while at the same time the extreme fruitfulness of the soil enabled them to obtain easily the necessaries of life, to exercise hospitality, and to dismiss from their minds all subordinate cares respecting their means of subsistence. Never before had any new colonists so few difficulties to encounter, or so little occasion for the exercise of patience and perseverance. Instead of finding their place of settlement embowered by forests, and unfit for cultivation till the timber was felled and removed, they saw around them fertile and open savannas ready to be broken up by the hoe or the plough; a variety of fine fruits indigenous to the islands grew in natural orchards; the interior of the country swarmed with wild cattle, which every man had full liberty to hunt and kill for his own use; and a mild and agreeable climate rendered unnecessary the erection of substantial and expensive buildings, either for residence or for storing the produce of the soil. Under such favourable circumstances the West Indian planters could scarcely fail to prosper; and from the absence of hardship or privation in the commencement of their career, doubtless resulted that buoyancy of disposition and liberal hospitality, and those social propensi-

ties, for which they were distinguished at a very early period, and have continued to be so ever since.

In comparing the character of the West Indian planters with that of other Europeans living in a similar climate, we perceive one striking point of difference, which it is more easy to describe than to account for. We are led by common observation to conclude that Europeans resident in tropical regions always lose either entirely or in a considerable degree, their physical and mental activity; and this more particularly if they are surrounded by slaves or obsequious attendants. The Dutch in the Eastern Islands slumber away their lives in unbroken quiescence, and never exercise their faculties except in performing those trivial duties which belong to their official situations; the English inhabitants of Hindostan are languid and indolent, and slow of excitement; the Spaniards residing in the Philippines and in central America have the same character; and the inhabitants of the European establishments on the West coast of Africa equally experience the sedative and enfeebling effects of a hot climate. But the British West Indian forms a contrast to all these examples. Buoyant in disposition, active in his habits, full of enterprise, jealous of his rights, devoted to business, and sensitive and

spirited in all the relations of life, he is a totally different being from what we are accustomed to meet with anywhere else within the limits of the torrid zone. That monotony of ideas, languor of manner, and frigidity of expression, which are the general characteristics of European society in tropical climates, are scarcely observable in the West Indies, where almost every one has an air of occupation and natural enjoyment, and where people appear to seek for sources of interest and excitement instead of idly waiting till these happen to present themselves.

It seems certain that the West Indians are in reality a happier set of men than other Europeans similarly situated, for they are seldom heard to make those complaints which have such universal currency amongst the residents of hot climates; they do not murmur at being exiled from their native land; they do not depreciate the region in which they abide, and vilify its inhabitants; nor do they torment themselves by calculating how long it will be before they can return to Europe. On the contrary, they rather affect a kind of *insouciance* in regard to such subjects, and are generally disposed to view their condition with complacency and satisfaction, instead of studying to find out reasons for being discontented. Their sensitiveness renders them easily depressed by

reverses of any kind, but they soon recover their spirits, and console themselves with bright, and too often deceitful, anticipations. Bryan Edwards, in remarking that the disposition for pleasure which characterises the creoles of both sexes has been ascribed to the levity of the atmosphere, says farther:—"To the same cause is commonly imputed the propensity observable in most of the West Indians to indulge extravagant ideas of their riches, to view those circumstances through a magnifying medium, and to feast their fancies on what another year will effect. This anticipation of imaginary wealth is so prevalent as to become justly ridiculous."

The superior activity of disposition which I have remarked as belonging to the West Indian planters, partly arises no doubt from the nature of their circumstances. Deriving their incomes exclusively from their estates, they find it their interest to apply themselves personally to the superintendence and management of these, and in so far their inducements to mental and bodily exertion greatly exceed those experienced by a man who draws a fixed and regular salary for the performance of specific and often inconsiderable duties, as is the case in several of the instances of European indolence in tropical climates to which I have referred. But admitting this, we are, on

the other hand, led to inquire how individuals in a state of pecuniary independence should not enjoy greater vivacity of mind and a more contented disposition than those in similar circumstances whose incomes and property are subject to perpetual fluctuation? Nevertheless the tone of enjoyment, and the play of animal spirits, are infinitely higher in the latter than amongst the former, as every one who has visited the West and East Indies, and had an opportunity of observing European society in the two countries, can testify.

The political history of Jamaica affords strong evidence of the continued mental energy of its European inhabitants. The colonists have, from their first settlement in the island, been in a state of almost perpetual dissension with the mother-country, and have resisted with extraordinary perseverance her various attempts to limit their prerogatives, and to restrain the exercise of that independence of her authority, which they have, it must be confessed, been on many occasions too much disposed to arrogate to themselves. Jamaica has scarcely ever enjoyed one day of political tranquillity since she became a British possession; and, whether she may have been right or wrong in resenting the interference of the English government in her local affairs, all her acts have

displayed an enduring firmness of principle, of which we shall find few examples in the history of European colonies within the tropics; the inhabitants of such seldom feeling very jealous of their political rights, or resisting with perseverance any encroachments that may be made upon these. The annals of the House of Assembly of Jamaica embrace a long train of fiery discussions upon points of prerogative, matters of trade, limits of colonial obedience, rights of jurisdiction, powers of voting supplies, and other subjects of a similar character; and the whole tenor of these displays the unrelaxed mental energy of her European inhabitants, and indicates the existence on their part of a degree of extensive information, acuteness of intellect, and vigour of the faculties, which seems foreign to the climate under which it has been unfolded.

The West Indian planters, generally speaking, are men of intelligence, good sense, and liberal ideas; affecting no fantastic refinement, and at the same time, for the most part, destitute of that which is produced by a taste for literature and the cultivation of the fine arts. A considerable portion of their time is employed in the superintendence of their estates; and the pleasure to which they chiefly devote their leisure moments is that of social intercourse. They shine as

convivial companions, and are never so happy as when exercising hospitality, which they do in a most agreeable and attractive style, whether as respects their personal deportment towards their guests, or the enjoyments and accommodations which they place at their disposal. Their tables are always abundant and often luxurious, and never more so than when the materials which cover them are exclusively the products of the West Indian Islands.

The West Indian Islands, for some time after the extermination of their aboriginal inhabitants, possessed only two races of men — Europeans and negroes. However, their mutual intercourse soon produced a third description of people called Mulattoes, whose offspring eventually constituted a fourth class, comprising many branches, all resembling each other, but ranking in society in proportion to the proximity of their European descent. Though persons of this kind are distinguished by the general appellation of mulattoes by the English, and meztizoes by the Spaniards, various other names are applied to their subdivisions, which are carried even to the fifth and sixth grades of descent, but which it is unnecessary to describe or enumerate here. The existence of the mulattoes in great numbers, and their intermediate station between the white

people and the negro slaves, have produced many inconsistencies and anomalous traits in the constitution of West Indian society, the European part of which has always pursued a vacillating system in its mode of treating a division of the community, whose real station and claims naturally seemed ambiguous to minds habituated to the spectacle of slavery. At one time, we find the white men conciliating the mulattoes, under the impression that they would thus be induced to protect them in the event of an insurrection of the slaves; and, at another, we observe them studying how to repress the real or fancied encroachments of the sallow race, and using every means to lower their pretensions and degrade them in their own estimation. A line of conduct so irritating and capricious might have often led to troublesome consequences, had the objects of it been differently situated; but distrustful of their own unassisted strength, and scorning any alliance with the negroes, the mulatto people have always remained in a state of subordination, whatever reasons they may have had for resentment against the whites, except in St. Domingo, where they were encouraged to revolt, and aided in their rebellion, by a party of the latter.

From the vast and necessary preponderance of the negro population over the European in

the West Indian Islands, it is evident that the former would often have effected the destruction of the latter, had no adjusting weight equalised the means and the scale of power between the two races. The mulatto community is the agent that silently operates here. These people will never join the slaves in a revolt, because they despise and distrust them, and because they are aware that the destruction of the whites would only be a prelude to their own. On the other hand, the negroes would not assist the mulattoes in any act of rebellion, from the fear of becoming their slaves in the event of its being successful; for they particularly dread the tyranny of these men, and consider them to be the severest of all masters.

It is worthy of remark that an admixture of European blood invariably has the effect of deteriorating the race in which it occurs, a fact little calculated to flatter the obstinate prejudices that most of us entertain respecting the natural superiority of our own species over that which is indigenous to any other quarter of the globe. The mulattoes of the West Indies are generally persons of feeble organization and imperfect mental developement; and no class of people, savage or civilized, have so seldom distinguished themselves in any way:

in them are alike neutralised the physical strength and habitual vivacity of the negro, and the sound judgment and comprehensive faculties of the European; and it is their nature to sink into a subordinate sphere, amongst whatever people and in whatever circumstances they happen to be placed. The annals of the African race present us with a Toussaint, a Dessalines, a Trudo, and a Christophe, whose talents and courage were conspicuous and indisputable. The only mulatto hero on record is the insurgent Ogé, who shed tears on being led to execution, and purchased a day's respite from death by revealing the names of his fellow conspirators.

The above remarks apply also to the half-castes of India, whether of Portuguese or British descent. They exhibit neither the rotund and well-proportioned forms of the natives of Hindostan, nor the muscular vigour of Europeans, but are meagre in their bodies and incapable of continued physical exertion. They however possess much acuteness, and a docile capacity; but these qualities are rendered inefficient by their indolence, and by the small ambition they have to shine and to excel. The character of the Portuguese mulattoes on the West coast of Africa has been mentioned in another part of this work. These people, from their youth upwards, present a frightful spectacle

of physical languor and emaciation; and the stranger visiting Cacheo, or the Island of St. Thomas, where they chiefly reside, shudders as he walks through streets where the surrounding passengers resemble corpses set in motion by mechanism. The men are mostly pirates and robbers, and the females devote themselves to prostitution.

Shall we be able to vary this picture of human deterioration by turning our view towards America? On the contrary, the meztizoes of Quito, and Mexico, and Vera Cruz, or, in other words, the offspring of Spaniards and Indian women, differ little from the mulattoes of Asia or Africa, except perhaps in their being even more indolent in their nature than either of the two. And if we direct our eyes to the frigid regions of North-west America, we shall still observe the same general result. From the intercourse of the *voyageurs* with the native women, there has sprung a race of half-breeds, called *Bois Brûlés*, who possess neither the courage and fortitude of the genuine Indian, nor the kind dispositions and joyous temper of the Canadian Frenchman, and who distrust their progenitors, and are in return despised and distrusted by them.

The physical qualities of the half-breed of every country are to be ascribed altogether to the

peculiar and mixed nature of his constitution; but his mental and moral defects partly depend upon another cause. Finding that the native race from whence he has sprung is undervalued, or perhaps despised, by his foreign parent, he seeks to alienate himself from it, and hastens to renounce its customs and its prejudices, and all community of feeling with those who belong to it; but, at the same time, not daring to adopt the ideas and assume the pretensions of Europeans, or finding it impossible to do so, he is constrained to take an intermediate station. Here, uncontrolled by the usages or the habits of thought peculiar to either race, and unable to identify himself with the one, and unwilling to have any connexion with the other, he becomes as it were negative in the scale of society, and remains a conspicuous example of one of the many ills which are entailed upon uncivilized nations by the intrusion of foreigners into their country. Thus, whether the European invaders of newly-discovered lands massacre the inhabitants by thousands, in the style adopted by the Spaniards, or gradually depopulate them by the introduction of ardent spirits and the small-pox, as the British have done, the result leads equally to the misery of the natives, and to the disturbance of that social order which had previously existed amongst them; and for the defects of

which, whatever these may have been we are in no manner responsible, though we are unquestionably so for the ills that so often spring from the presumptuous and interested attempts which we make to correct them.

I purposely avoid saying anything upon the subject of slavery in the West Indies, because the character and peculiarities of the negro race have been sufficiently described in another part of this work. But I must, nevertheless, protest against the odium of slavery and its attendant evils being thrown upon the West Indian planters, as is too commonly done, and in particular by the advocates of general and immediate emancipation. It is well known that the slave trade was long carried on under the auspices and protection of the British government, as the charters granted to different African companies serve to show; and had not the settlers in the West Indian Islands been thus encouraged to invest their capital in slaves, and to cultivate extensively the staple productions of the soil, they would have employed their means and their time in some other way. What man would have purchased negroes, or devoted himself to sugar or coffee planting, had he foreseen, or even suspected, that attempts would be made to force him to emancipate his slaves without compensation to

himself, and without regard to the ruin in which such a measure was calculated to involve him? Great Britain has latterly perceived and acknowledged the error which she committed in authorising the slave trade: but are the individuals whom she misled by her previous encouragement of the traffic to be sacrificed at the shrine of the new system of policy which has been adopted? Is it not enough that the commerce in human beings has been discontinued by every European power? When the root of a tree is destroyed, the shoots which it may have produced must quickly perish; and, in like manner, our present slave population will gradually disappear, and be absorbed in the mass of society, without the outrageous interference of the general emancipator, and the merciless and unjustifiable ruin of the West Indian agriculturist.

The emancipation of the slaves in the British West Indian Islands is a measure of such importance and magnitude, and involves so many serious consequences and considerations, that we naturally are induced to inquire into the pretensions of those persons who have been particularly active in urging its adoption and supporting its expediency. Let us ask if sound judgment and extensive local observation have qualified them to come to correct conclusions upon the subject, and

we shall find that most of them belong to a class of people who may be designated under the title of fire-side philanthropists; or who, in other words, are men who seek to obtain the reputation of superior piety and benevolence at the cheapest rate practicable, and at the smallest possible sacrifice of personal convenience. With individuals of this kind the evils of the slave trade, and the expediency of emancipating its victims, have always, for obvious reasons, been favourite subjects of declamation. In general, when a man exerts himself in any particular cause connected with the interests of humanity, he is liable to suffer for his activity and boldness in some way or other. The zealous pursuit of his chosen object perhaps demands that he should neglect his private affairs, or causes him to offend persons in power, or leads him into danger and privation, or exposes him to censure and animosity, or requires the sacrifice of a large part of his fortune. But the advocates for the abolition of slavery in the colonies have had no trials of this kind to encounter. The public opinion has been with them in a general sense, however much individuals may have differed from them in their particular views of the subject; and the emancipators have pursued their career, and published their sentiments, without incurring either trouble, or dan-

ger, or expense, or inconvenience, or fatigue, with the exception of so much of the latter as might have been occasioned by their long and continued talking.

Las Casas, the protector of the Indians, visited America four times in furtherance of his benevolent designs; and at length, finding that the archbishopric which had been conferred upon him, impeded his exertions in the cause of humanity, he resigned it. Howard, the philanthropist, desirous of ameliorating the condition of prisoners, thought it necessary to traverse Europe twice in search of the requisite information upon the subject, and at last fell a victim to his devoted perseverance. These two great men were deeply sensible that their labours in the departments which they had respectively chosen could not be efficient unless they were founded upon personal observation; and to secure this important advantage, they cheerfully exposed themselves to the hardships and dangers of foreign travelling. Surely, if there is one subject which more than any other demands for its elucidation the lights derived from local knowledge and minute personal enquiry, it is that of negro emancipation. Yet which of its advocates has ever thought of visiting the West Indies with that view? Which of them has thought it necessary to see slavery

with his own eyes, and to verify the statements of others relative to it? Day after day, noisy, clamorous, and obtrusive in the House of Parliament; ever ready to declaim and vote resolutions at a public meeting; and at all times eager to calumniate the absent slave-holders, their timid hearts would sink within them at the idea of a voyage to the West Indies; and they prefer total ignorance of the real features of the cause which they advocate, to the risk of visiting the scene of their vapid philanthropy, where they know they should encounter the dangers of an unhealthy climate and the ardour of a tropical sun, and observe things which would constrain them to acknowledge the fallaciousness of their opinions upon the subject to which they have hitherto uselessly devoted so much time and attention.

BRITISH AMERICA.

NORTH AMERICAN OCEAN.

The North Atlantic Ocean has during three centuries past formed the grand maritime highway of nations, and been the theatre of a greater variety of nautical scenes, incidents, and adventures, than all the other seas in the world. From the time that Columbus pointed out the route to America, up to the present day, a progressively increasing concourse of ships has traversed its widest expanse; and those waters, which for thousands of years before had lain undisturbed except by the winds, became in a short time a field of human enterprise and commercial activity. Nearly all parts of the ocean except the Atlantic were found to have been at least partially frequented by their contiguous inhabitants, previous to the discovery and exploring of them by Europeans. The Phenicians and Carthaginians had navigated the Mediterranean; the Arabs were well acquainted with the Red Sea, and with a considera-

ble extent of the Indian Ocean; the Polynesian islanders had been in the habit of sailing between the archipelagoes of the Southern Pacific; the Chinese and Malays had visited the whole of the eastern seas; and the Esquimaux had made little voyages within the Polar circle, long before any European ships visited their respective parts of the globe. But it is indisputable that no vessel, or boat, or canoe, had ever crossed that division of the Atlantic lying within 40° north latitude previous to the expedition of Sebastian Cabot, in the reign of Henry the Seventh of England. The Romans and Carthaginians often looked through the Pillars of Hercules, as through a door opening into the immensity of space, and wished to ascertain what lay beyond them towards the west; but their mariners, at those times when they did venture upon the Atlantic, timidly followed the coasts either of Africa or of Europe, instead of launching forth into the main sea; which had, on the other hand, no visitants from an opposite quarter, the natives of North America being unprovided with vessels capable of encountering its boisterousness.

No part of the surface of our globe, whether oceanic or terrestrial, if viewed at any two periods of its history, will be found to present stronger contrasts than the Atlantic does, when we com-

pare its aspect previous to the discovery of America with the one which it has exhibited since that æra. During the first period, it appears as a solitary expanse of water, traversed only by its animal inhabitants, and unvaried externally except by its own undulations; but during the next, we observe it crowded with the ships of different nations, passing and repassing each other in the hurry of commercial rivalry; we discover hostile fleets manœuvring for battle, and hear the thunders of their cannon; we perceive mighty ships disabled by tempests and foundering in the open sea; we count thousands of vessels employed in a fishery remote from any land; we see transports conveying soldiers from the Old World to the New, or filled with peasants and mechanics, who have been forced by poverty to quit their native country, and to seek refuge in an unpeopled wilderness. In short, we find this once solitary and unvisited ocean sprinkled with little moving masses of human beings, and a theatre upon which are exhibited, in a detached manner, all those scenes of adventurousness, courage, danger, misfortune, suffering, discord, warfare, violence, and competition, which occur in the most populous and highly civilized regions of Europe — with this difference, however, that the sea never retains any trace nor presents any memorial of the crimes

and outrages which men may have committed upon its surface — its waters, furrowed by the passing ship, or agitated by the struggles of drowning multitudes, soon resuming their former smoothness and tranquillity: while, on the other hand, the shameless earth refuses so quickly to hide the heaps of skeletons, the ruined habitations, and the records of public and private misery, which abound in its most favoured divisions, and perpetually humiliate and insult the bystander, by forcing upon his recollection the past history of his own species.

But if the North Atlantic Ocean presents nautical objects and nautical life under an infinite variety of forms, it is proportionably destitute of features of physical interest and of natural beauty. It consists of a turbulent and uninterrupted expanse, upon which we shall in vain look for the serene atmosphere, brilliant skies, and nocturnal splendours of the tropical seas; or for the ever-verdant and far-extending archipelagoes of the Pacific and Eastern Oceans; or for the varied and magnificent coral formations which abound within the torrid zone; or for the glacial architecture and strange optical deceptions of the Polar waters; or even for those marine productions, vegetable and animal, that in various quarters of the globe float upon the waves, and rise from the deep and ex-

hibit themselves to the passing voyager. The climate of the Northern Atlantic is boisterous and uncertain even during summer, and the prevalence of high winds, and the want of islands to break the long and tumultuous swell of the sea, produce an almost perpetual agitation of its waters. Here, as in most other parts of the ocean in either hemisphere, the strongest gales blow from the north and the north-west; but in duration they exceed what is known anywhere else, as they are sometimes found to continue with unabated violence for twelve or fifteen days together. At these times a terrific sea gets up; and though the waves do not equal in elevation those that occur in tempestuous weather in the South African Ocean and in the neighbourhood of Cape Horn, they are more dangerous to ships than in these instances, because they are propelled with much greater velocity. Therefore a vessel cannot continue so long scudding or running before a gale of wind in the Atlantic as she can do almost anywhere else, for the waves there at length acquire such a rapid progression of movement, that she is liable to be overtaken and overwhelmed by them. We shall find that in all latitudes the waves attain their utmost possible height in sixty or seventy hours after the commencement of a hard gale, and that subsequently, however long the wind may con-

tinue, they never acquire a greater elevation, but are merely propelled with increased rapidity; and it is for this reason that even the best equipped ship is always forced to heave to and bow the sea, when tempestuous weather has prevailed from the same quarter many days in succession; because, were she to persist in scudding, she would find it necessary to carry a regularly increasing proportion of sail so long as the wind continued, in order that she might be able to keep pace with the increasing progressive movement of the waves, and, as it were, outstrip and escape them. But this she could not do, for her masts would sooner or later give way under the pressure of so much canvass, or she would bury her bows in the water and eventually founder.

The North Atlantic Ocean is remarkable for a peculiar kind of tempest which occurs nowhere else in so marked and distinct a form. This is called by mariners a white gale, because it is unaccompanied with that obscurity of the atmosphere, and that showery weather, which in general attend violent winds in all parts of the ocean. On the contrary, during a white gale, there is always brilliant sunshine and a cloudless and transparent sky, and these form a singular and startling contrast with the furious blast and with the raging sea. A storm of this description seldom lasts

longer than twelve hours, and is generally succeeded by one of the common sort. These white gales have in appearance a great affinity to those sudden and temporary gusts of wind, called white squalls, which often occur in the China and in the Eastern seas; and both probably arise from the rapid condensation of a greater or less portion of the atmosphere in the neighbourhood of the spot where they take place, and consist of the current of air which rushes with impetuosity to fill up the vacuum thus produced. Should the latter be of small extent, it is supplied almost instantaneously, and a squall of short duration suffices to restore the atmospheric equilibrium; but when it is of great extent, the requisite adjustment is of course effected more slowly, and a gale of greater or less continuance is the result. The cause of tempests of the common sort is to be found in the direction from whence they proceed, but that of the kind in question actually lies in the quarter towards which they blow.

The North Atlantic Ocean being turbulent in its character, and destitute of islands, it is scarcely necessary to remark that its surface does not abound with animal forms of any kind. Here fishes seldom appear either singly or in shoals, and the small storm petrel is the only bird that is frequently seen. If we consider how few parts

of even the terrestrial portion of our globe are peopled to the utmost conceivable degree with living things, and how many extensive regions remain absolutely untenanted by these, whether of a high or of a low grade, we shall be little disposed to accede to the opinion of those theorists who insist that Providence, in forming the animal creation, had in view the greatest possible multiplication of life and enjoyment; and that in hourly effecting by secondary causes the destruction of a vast number of creatures of every species, his intent is merely to make room for other individuals of the same or of a different kind; and that these last, having in their turn participated in the pleasures of existence, are likewise to be displaced for the benefit of the generations designed to succeed them. Were things constituted in this manner, we should not meet with sterile and solitary regions extending hundreds of square miles, nor should we anywhere observe vast tracts of country in a state of negation, or nearly so, as far as respects the distribution of animal life. On the contrary, the plains of Siberia, the steppes of Tartary, the deserts of Africa and Arabia, the Pampas of the Rio de la Plata, the range of Andes, the wilds of North-west America, and the Polar lands of both hemispheres, would abound with living creatures, and present us with multipli-

ed instances of that system of successive existence and successive enjoyment which is in reality in active operation in very few parts of the earth. And if we turn our view to the ocean in general, to which I ought properly to confine my remarks, we shall be equally struck with the sparing and partial distribution of animal life there. Even those birds that obtain their food exclusively from the sea, are extremely rare in all the great oceans of both hemispheres; and the mariner may sail hundreds of leagues without observing a single individual of the kind: nor do we find that fishes are much more plentiful, though it must be admitted that it is less easy to discover them, and that it is difficult to prove that they do not exist in places where they are not seen. But we have every reason to believe that they abound in those parts of the ocean only which are of comparatively small depth, and that the grand bulk of its waters is entirely destitute of them, or of any other inhabitants. All the fisheries in the world, except that of the whale, exist in soundings, and can be pursued there only; it being useless to attempt to take fish in the middle of any of the great oceans, except in those places where islands or sandbanks produce the requisite degree of shallowness; and were any individual in crossing the North Atlantic to practise every description of

fishing in the course of his passage, he would meet with no success until he reached the edge of the banks of Newfoundland, where the depth of water averages from seventy to one hundred fathoms. Hence we may conclude that all the deeper parts of the ocean are uninhabited except very near the bottom, the neighbourhood of that being essential to the existence of those kinds of fishes that multiply fast and congregate in great numbers. Thus the proportion of animated things peopling the earth, the air, and the ocean, falls immensely short of what the respective regions of these three media are calculated to support and contain; and from this we may infer that the mere multiplication of forms and grades of existence is neither a principle that enters into the constitution of our planet, nor an object that ever was contemplated by its Creator.

Since there are neither islands, nor animals, nor physical phenomena, to detain us in our survey of the North Atlantic, we must hurry across it till we reach the banks of Newfoundland, which are not less worthy of attention from their magnitude than on account of the celebrity and importance of the fishery that is annually carried on upon them. We find similar accumulations of sand, or, more properly speaking, elevated tracts of ground, in various parts of the ocean, particu-

larly in the Zuyder Zee, and in the British and German Oceans, and in the neighbourhood of the Cape of Good Hope; but in none of these instances do they nearly equal in size the great bank of Newfoundland, which is about five hundred and fifty miles long, and from one to two hundred miles wide. The soundings average sixty fathoms over its whole extent, and its edges are generally steep, instead of sloping down in a gradual manner to the level of the bottom of the surrounding ocean. The surface of this great bank is composed of sand, mud, and broken shells; and a large part of its entire mass consists most probably of materials of the kind deposited by the Florida Gulf stream, which, after winding along the coast of America, is checked in its northerly progress between latitude 45° and 50°, and there ceases to flow in a continuous current. Its waters being thus repelled, and, as it were, rendered stagnant, will naturally let fall the extraneous matter which they may previously have carried along with them, and thus occasion an extensive elevation in the bottom of the sea; and this opinion derives support from the statements of the Newfoundland fishermen and others, who report that the depth of water upon the great bank is gradually decreasing. This being the case, there is some likelihood that after the

lapse of centuries, it will have risen nearly to the surface of the sea, and that it will eventually constitute a tract of land connected with the present coast of America, or disjoined from it only by a narrow strait, like that of Bellisle.

It is between February and June that the Newfoundland cod-fishery is most successfully pursued. During that period vessels of all nations resort to the banks, and between two and three thousand fishing-craft are often found assembled there at one time. The voyager arriving in that quarter on his passage from Europe to America, and wearied by the solitariness and monotony of the Atlantic, in which he perhaps has not met a single sail, is powerfully affected by the concourse of vessels which he sees assembled upon the banks of Newfoundland, and by the variety of languages which he hears spoken by their crews, as he proceeds across the fishing station; the privilege of resorting to which has often been a subject of contest amongst the maritime nations of Europe, not because the quantity of cod procurable there is inadequate to supply the wants of all countries, but because the fishery itself forms a lucrative branch of commerce which is well worth the monopolizing, and likewise an excellent and convenient nursery for seamen. And it is worthy of remark, that the banks of

Newfoundland derive their importance, not from the natural wants of mankind, but from artificial ones dependant upon religious principles. The general observance of Lent by Catholics in all parts of the world, is the source of that immense demand for fish which leads so many nations to engage in the capture of the cod, and to preserve and convey it to the most distant markets. The Newfoundland fishery has at all times been pursued chiefly by Protestants, and they themselves, or their countrymen, consume but a very insignificant part of its products; the grand proportion of these being distributed over France, Spain, Italy, and South America, for the use of their respective inhabitants. Nor, were the whole world of the Catholic persuasion, would there be any difficulty in obtaining from the banks of Newfoundland alone a sufficient supply of fish for the subsistence of its entire population during the period of Lent, however rigidly its fast might be kept.

It would form a curious subject of speculation to inquire to what extent the ocean in general could be made to furnish materials for the subsistence of the human race; and whether its products might not by some mode of treatment and preservation be rendered extensively available as food to the lower classes of people, even in the most

inland countries, during periods of famine. The supply of all edible things, whether of an animal or vegetable nature, is more or less precarious, with the exception of that of certain kinds of fish. Even in the most temperate regions, an untoward season sometimes prevents the ripening of the crops, or perhaps partly destroys them after they have attained maturity; but misfortunes of this kind are much more common in the neighbourhood of the tropics, and of the arctic circle. In the former situation the periodical rains are often scanty, or even altogether wanting, and the labours of the agriculturist consequently become useless; or flights of locusts devastate the land; or plague or pestilence cause the inhabitants to neglect its cultivation; while, in the latter parts of the globe, the severity of the climate will seldom allow the soil to produce a sufficient quantity of grain for the annual subsistence of its population, and the want of pasture during three-fourths of the year is unfavourable to the multiplication of cattle and other domestic animals. But no region however fertile can be made to yield more than a certain quantity of food for the human species; and long before it has been forced to this maximum of productiveness, all the necessaries of life have become so high-priced that the lower classes of its people suffer great and un-

avoidable privations. The ocean, however, more liberal than the earth, gives abundant supplies of food without cultivation, and freely dispenses her treasures to all who choose to take them ; nor is the extent of her bounty ever affected by those physical causes which often restrain or destroy the fertility of the ground. Vast shoals of herrings are sure to visit the coasts and islands of northern Europe, and countless millions of cod to swarm upon the banks of Newfoundland, whatever the nature of the seasons may be. The latter part of the ocean of itself forms a storehouse from which an unlimited quantity of food might annually be obtained and distributed over Europe, at an inconsiderable expense, so as greatly to lower the price of provisions in its populous districts, and to afford a resource to every class of men in times of famine.

If we consider the general boisterousness of the North Atlantic Ocean, and the prevalence of strong westerly gales there, we shall find great cause to admire the intrepidity of those navigators who first ventured to cross it. Cabot and Cottereal, and the other early discoverers of North America, chose a much more difficult and perilous route than Columbus did, who, had he attempted to reach the New World by following a high parallel of latitude, would probably have altogether failed

in his object, from the frailness of his vessels and the mutinous disposition of his crew. But by pursuing a track which quickly brought him within the influence of the north-east trade wind, he secured to himself a smooth sea and moderate weather, and thus was able to accomplish his voyage without encountering those distresses and delays which mariners are ever liable to experience upon the more northerly parts of the Atlantic. Nor are the nautical exploits that were performed at a later period in that quarter less admirable than the earliest ones, even admitting that in the interval some improvement had been effected in the construction and equipment of ships. The voyages of Frobisher, Hudson, and Davis afford examples of seamanship that are unequalled in the maritime annals of any country in Europe, not even excepting those of Portugal; for the passage to India round the Cape of Good Hope, performed under the auspices of that nation, is of all others of any great length the most pacific and the most free from hidden or apparent dangers; and the celebrated tempests of the South African Ocean are in reality far less perilous than those of the Northern Atlantic, which has undoubtedly been the grand school of navigation to the moderns, who never could have attained in any other part of the ocean that practical know-

ledge of the art which they now possess in such a high degree, and employ so much to their advantage. In the Mediterranean and in the intertropical seas, where the sky is usually serene, where storms seldom continue long, and where total darkness is scarcely known, the mariner, in general certain of his reckoning, may conduct even a frail vessel from port to port without risk or accident; but in the Northern Ocean, his duties and his responsibility assume a more serious character and aspect. There, harassed by furious winds and turbulent waves, or hove-to for days or weeks together under the roaring blast, or bewildered by incessant showers of sleet and snow, or unable to obtain an observation for the latitude owing to the obscurity of the weather, or embayed in a gulf and drifting upon a lee-shore, in a night of murky darkness and polar duration, he must ever be on the alert to foresee and obviate danger, to calculate probabilities, to practise nautical manœuvres, and to enter into successful contention with the elements. It is true, that that part of the Atlantic Ocean lying between the west side of Ireland and the entrance of the Gulf of St. Lawrence is of safe and easy navigation, in so far as it includes no islands or hidden dangers; but the outward-bound vessel is liable to be detained and even driven back by violent, baffling,

and long-continued westerly winds; and no sooner has she passed the banks of Newfoundland than difficulties of another kind beset her, arising from the hazy weather, the broken coasts, the strong currents, and the numerous islands in that quarter; nor do obstacles of the kind cease to retard her progress till she has advanced two hundred miles up the river St. Lawrence.

Though the North Atlantic has for centuries past been frequented by all kinds of vessels, and though innumerable nautical disasters have occurred upon it, we do not find that its annals present any instances of those perilous and extraordinary voyages which have been accomplished with apparently inadequate resources in various other parts of the ocean; and the cause of this undoubtedly lies in its extreme boisterousness having in general proved fatal to those who have attempted to navigate it in small or unsuitable vessels. The three most remarkable voyages of the kind in question, are those of Botello, of Maurello, and of Bligh; and though none of them took place in the North Atlantic, a cursory account of them may appropriately enough be introduced here, as I have just made some remarks upon the opposite character of the northern and of the intertropical seas.

We are told by Lafitau, the Jesuit, that when

the fortress of Diu, situated at the mouth of the Gulf of Cambay, fell into the hands of the Portuguese, Acughna, who was at that time viceroy of the Indies, aware how much his sovereign would be gratified by that event, directed two messengers to proceed to Portugal with intelligence of it—the one over land, and the other by the usual route round the Cape of Good Hope. A Portuguese gentleman, named Diego Botello, who had assisted at the siege of Diu, and who had some time before accidentally and unmeritedly lost favour at court, thought that a favourable opportunity of retrieving his character and acquiring distinction now presented itself; and he formed the design of outstripping the viceroy's couriers, and arriving in Lisbon before either of them with the news of the capture of the fortress. With this view, he secretly procured a boat, which was without a deck, and only twenty-two feet long, and having provisioned it in the best way possible, he embarked in it with three of his countrymen and several slaves, and set sail for Lisbon. Botello, after they had been some weeks at sea, lost his voice from having exerted it too much in giving the necessary instructions to his crew, and he remained fourteen days without the power of utterance, and was obliged during that time to communicate his orders in writing.

Towards the middle of the voyage the slaves mutinied and refused to proceed any farther, but he managed to conciliate them and to re-establish his authority; and at length arrived in health and safety in Lisbon, and had the satisfaction of being the first to give his sovereign intelligence of the surrender of Diu. Every one regarded Botello with astonishment and admiration, as having performed the most wonderful nautical feat recorded in history; but the Holy Inquisition, suspecting that he was addicted to magical pursuits, seized his boat, and caused it to be publicly burnt; nor did he derive that favour at court which he had anticipated, and which ought to have been part of the reward of his desperate enterprise. This voyage will appear less incredible if we refer to one which, according to Humboldt, was performed in the Pacific Ocean by a Spaniard named Maurello, who sailed from San Blas, on the west coast of Mexico, in a pinnace, to Manilla, a distance of nearly nine thousand miles; his object being to convey to the latter port intelligence of the declaration of war between Spain and England. But these two instances of nautical enterprise are exceeded by the voyage of Bligh, in so far as Botello and Maurello, having had time to provide themselves with marine instruments and equipments, were in a manner prepared for the dangers

which they had to encounter; while the English navigator was suddenly forced to quit his vessel by a mutinous crew, and to put to sea in its launch, with eighteen companions and a scanty supply of water and provisions. This launch was only twenty-three feet long and of course undecked; but, nevertheless, Lieutenant Bligh and his associates in misfortune set sail in her from the island of Tofooa, situated in the Sandwich archipelago, and, standing out to sea, laid their course for Timor, and arrived there in safety; having run a distance of four thousand miles, and experienced much tempestuous weather, in the course of their daring voyage. Nor is the exploit of the commander of the British ship of war Centaur unworthy of being mentioned here. That vessel being about to founder, after having encountered a hurricane in the West Indian Ocean, her captain and several of the crew took refuge in the jolly-boat, in the midst of the tempest, and, steering across the Atlantic, reached the coast of England, a distance of three thousand miles from their point of departure.

These instances of nautical adventure are perhaps less curious in themselves, than valuable from their showing how much may be effected at sea with small resources under the most discouraging circumstances. And even in the midst of the

turbulent North Atlantic, the shipwrecked mariner ought never to lose hope; for a fragile skiff may serve to convey him to the nearest shore, however remote that may be, if he makes intrepidity and practical knowledge co-operate in the hour of danger.

GENERAL PHYSICAL CHARACTER OF BRITISH AMERICA.

The approach to British America, by the usual route through the Gulf of St. Lawrence, is of a sombre and melancholy character. At the entrance of the Gulf, and upon the left, is Newfoundland, half concealed by dense fogs; and upon the right, the sterile shores of Cape Breton rise abruptly out of the sea, which there begins to assume a tawny colour from the admixture of fresh water. Nor does the scene improve even at the mouth of the river St. Lawrence, for there the solitary and pine-covered island of Anticosti fatigues the eye by its great length, and by the uniformity of its appearance, and beyond it the lands upon both sides are bleak and uncultivated. About fifty miles farther up, the banks of the river present the white cottages of fishermen and farmers, scattered far apart, and the soil improves in fertility, and is in some places covered with thickets of natural wood; but it is only a short

way below the island of Orleans, or two hundred miles above the mouth of the St. Lawrence, that Canada assumes a fertile and attractive aspect, or shows any defined marks of populousness and civilization. Advancing beyond this point, in the direction of the river, we find its banks displaying a progressive increase of beauty and productiveness, overshadowed by a superb vegetation, and rising from the edge of the stream with that gradual slope which is so favourable to agriculture. The sombre pine-forests of the lower districts give place to more varied and agreeable vegetable forms; large tracts of tilled ground occur within short distances of each other; houses and flocks of cattle here and there enliven the scene; and the country in general appears to be defective in none of Nature's choicest and most valuable gifts. These characters continue, though in many places in a less concentrated form, throughout the whole course of the river upwards, and even along part of the shores of Lakes Ontario and Erie; but they entirely disappear at the head of the latter, and scenes of wildness, solitude, and sterility there supply their place, and extend westward without interruption to the Pacific Ocean, and northward to the icy regions of the Pole.

British North America is one of the largest

tracts of country in the world; for its extreme length east and west exceeds three thousand miles, and its average breadth south and north is two thousand, allowing its boundary in the latter direction to run in the general parallel of the spot, about latitude 70° north, where Mackenzie discovered the sea. This immense territory has as yet been but partially explored, in particular to the eastward, where Labrador is situated; and this is little to be regretted, either by the geographer or the man of science, for the researches of travellers in its interior and remoter parts have not hitherto produced anything calculated to make us desirous that these should be extended and continued.

Nearly the whole extent of British America is remarkable for a sombreness and an uniformity of aspect. There, in whatever direction we turn, we observe an endless succession of rivers, forests, and lakes, respectively bearing a strong similarity of character, and deficient, as a whole, in animation and in vividness of contrast. The traveller in these regions, even when he meets with the utmost variety of objects which they anywhere afford, is wearied and depressed by a repetition of the same sensations; and it seems to him that Nature there, whatever garb she may wear, always speaks the same language, and

is capable of expressing only one sentiment. One day seated in his canoe, he stems the current of some far-winding river, or forces his way over its rapids and cascades; on another, he sails across a silent and misty lake; and on a third, he pursues his course through extensive forests—and night after night he encamps in a thicket, and sleeps in the security of absolute solitude, almost forgetful that the world contains any inhabitants but himself and the companions of his journey. Seeing neither men nor animals, he views with impatience regions that are calculated for the residence of both; and the more so because the face of Nature is there destitute alike of that variety, and of that repulsiveness, either of which go far to reconcile us to the absence of living forms, and to the stillness and inactivity of uninhabited territories.

Of all the physical peculiarities of British America, the most remarkable is the general levelness of its surface; for in the vast extent of territory comprehended between the coast of Labrador and the Rocky Mountains, there does not exist one range of hills, nor even a single peak of moderate elevation. The highest lands in that part of the globe seldom rise more than four hundred feet above the level of the surrounding country, and in many places unbroken

plains are found the same number of miles in circumference. Rivers flow at the bottom of most of the valleys, which last are seldom of any considerable depth; and those that are dry present in general smooth declivities, and are neither very wide nor very profound. Yet British America, unlike all other regions of a similar conformation, abounds in an extraordinary degree with lakes and rivers, and is everywhere permeated by an excess of moisture which often proves injurious to vegetation. Nearly all its different bodies of water, great and small, and flowing and stagnant, have a more or less direct communication with one another; and they collectively extend like an immense piece of aquatic network over the wide-spreading region which gives birth to them.

These physical phenomena have led some philosophical speculators to regard North America as of more recent formation than any of the other quarters of the globe. They insist that the levelness of its surface, the moistness of its soil, and the magnitude and number of its lakes and rivers, indicate that it has but lately emerged from the ocean; and that after it has been subjected for a certain length of time to the processes of evaporation and detrition, and to the influence of the sun, it will acquire that inequa-

lity, and that comparative aridity of surface, which belong to the continents of the Old World. Upon the same principle, we are told that Africa must be the most ancient division of our planet, because her surface is everywhere elevated into chains of spinous mountains and intersected by deep valleys, and presents vast sandy deserts and burnt-up plains, destitute of vegetation, and unrefreshed by springs of water. Nor can it be denied that there is something specious and plausible in these opinions, though they are perhaps more agreeable to the imagination than satisfactory to the judgment. In contemplating the general physical character of North America, we are forcibly struck with the air of freshness and juvenility which belongs to it; for we observe that the surface of the country almost everywhere presents an abundant vegetation, a fertile soil, a rotundity of outline, an unfailing supply of water, and a tranquil disposition of strata; while those regions of the globe which we are taught to regard as the cradle of our species, wear a very different aspect, and seem to be exhausted by long and incessant reproduction. In the present day we find some difficulty in believing that Egypt, Syria, and the countries bordering on the Euphrates, were at one time the seat of mighty empires, and of a prodigious multitude of inha-

bitants, because their fertility is now of a very limited kind; and at first view we are disposed to conclude that it must always have been so, because no actual change in that respect has taken place within the range of modern observation; but we must either reject the testimony of ancient historians, or admit that these countries were once as fruitful as they are now unproductive—and into what a perplexing field of conjecture does the latter opinion lead us? for if it be tenable in one instance, it must likewise be so in a variety of others. We shall then feel disposed to regard the deserts of Africa and of Arabia as having formerly been fertile and populous countries, and will anticipate the time when the most favoured and the most thickly inhabited parts of the globe will be reduced to a state of sterility and solitude.

But our speculations upon this subject can never enable us to conjecture whether those regions that have become, and are in the course of becoming, unfit for the occupation of the human race, will, after a lapse of ages resume their pristine fruitfulness; or whether the earth, wearied of our species, and hostile to its perpetuation, is divesting herself in successive portions of her fertility, and will at length become an entire desert upon which no flower can bloom

and no flesh can live. And it is worthy of remark, that an opinion of this kind is found to exist, in a more or less developed form, amongst nearly all nations, barbarous and civilized. The decreasing fertility of the earth, and its eventual unfitness for the abode of the human race, are assumed as truths by people who have never taken the trouble to seek for a verification of either; and the Grecian allegory of the golden, the silver, and the iron ages has been repeated and believed under various guises in every latitude between the arctic and antarctic circles. It is a contemplation of the miserable condition of man — of the excesses which he is led to commit—of his incapacity to improve his circumstances—and of the state of perpetual dissension in which he lives with his fellow-beings, that has led the sages of most countries to conclude that such an order of things cannot for ever continue, and that the physical agents in actual operation upon the surface of our planet are calculated to lead eventually to the extinction of its inhabitants. The Chaldeans and Egyptians alone rejected all theories of this nature, which is not calculated to astonish us, when we reflect that their temperament was in a high degree sombre, melancholic, and desponding, and that with the latter, Typhon, a personification of moral evil, was

one of the principal characters in their mythology. In speculating upon the nature and constitution of our planet, they adopted the doctrine of cycles — a system of optimism the most untisfactory and depressing that ever was contrived or promulgated. By a cycle they meant to express that period within which the whole universe effects one complete revolution, which was supposed to be sixty thousand years. They assumed that, at the end of a cycle, each of the heavenly bodies had arrived at the precise spot from whence it had first commenced its career on its being created, and that from thence the whole of them were again simultaneously propelled in their respective courses, again to perform these within the same space of time. And, moreover, all the events that had occurred in any planet, all the creatures that had lived in it, and all the good and evil of which it had been the scene, within the period of its first revolution, were to be repeated under the same form, and in the same succession, within the period of every future one. But we must not suppose that those who adopted these opinions found any satisfaction in them, or in the idea that the things and the events which they observed in their own planet, were to recur in the course of every succeeding cycle, and that the existing mundane

system was to continue for ever without change and without amelioration.

I have already remarked, that the three great physical features of British America are rivers, lakes, and forests, and I will now shortly describe the general character of each of these classes of objects respectively. The St. Lawrence is one of the largest rivers in the world; for though the length of its course seems inconsiderable when compared with that of many other great streams, yet in the quantity of water which it discharges into the ocean it falls short of only two of these—the Amazon and the La Plata; while in navigableness and beauty it far surpasses them both. Unlike most other grand rivers, its mouth is not obstructed by a bar of sand, nor are there any dangerous shoals in its channel, which everywhere between the island of Anticosti and the town of Montreal, a distance of nearly six hundred miles, affords a safe and easy passage for ships of any burthen. The banks of the St. Lawrence towards the lower part of its course, are barren and uninteresting, and higher up they are in general thickly wooded, and somewhat tame in their character, but the ever-varying appearance of the river itself amply supplies this defect. In some places it glides along in unruffled tranquillity,

and with a slow current; in others it is divided by groups of rocky islands into a variety of channels, and rendered more rapid in its progress; a little way farther on it will expand into the appearance of a lake several miles broad, and afterwards contract itself into less than its average width, and rushing over broken rocks present an agitated and foaming surface. And what contributes not a little to render the St. Lawrence more attractive than most other large rivers is the general dryness and accessibleness of its banks, which, instead of being covered with mud and drift-wood, are nearly everywhere free from any obstruction even close to the edge of the water, and this is to be ascribed to the equality in its level which the river preserves throughout the whole year; for it is never swelled by floods, nor in any way affected by the most continued rains, or by the melting of the annual snows. It would be useless to describe or even to name the various streams, some of them of considerable size, which disembogue into the St. Lawrence, or to mention individually the rivers of North-west America. The Mackenzie and the Coppermine rivers are the most important ones in that quarter; and these, and nearly all others in British America, have a strong resemblance in their general character and appearance, which latter may be expressed in a few words.

For the most part their banks are low and covered with timber, which towards the north grows to but a small height; their channels are sinuous, and here and there obstructed by rapids and cascades, and they generally have their source in lakes or discharge themselves into these; while in their course they throw off many branches, and receive a proportionable number from neighbouring streams, thus producing that universal and complicated connexion of waters for which British America is so remarkable.

The lakes of these regions next demand some notice, but, great as they are in magnitude, they afford little scope for description; nor do any of the features of our globe present fewer varieties of aspect and physical character than large collections of fresh water in whatever country they may occur. Lakes Ontario, Erie, Huron, Michigan, Superior, and Winnipeg, resemble each other in every particular except in extent, and in the greater or less fertility of their borders. All these lakes are navigable by ships of any burthen, but in most of them westerly winds prevail to an inconvenient degree during summer, and greatly retard the passage of vessels bound in that direction, and their shores are but indifferently provided with harbours. Humboldt has remarked, that few physical circumstances in

the external conformation of our planet exert a greater influence upon the character of nations and the progress of society than mediterranean seas, which never fail to promote civilization, by enabling the inhabitants of the contiguous regions to come into contact with each other, and to exchange their manufactures and the productions of their soil.

In no part of the globe shall we find a state of water-communication *apparently* more calculated to exemplify this truth than in British North America, where a succession of lakes extending nearly two thousand miles communicate with each other, or, at least, could be made to do so at a small expense of time and labour; but as all the adjoining countries, when they are peopled, will, owing to the similarity of their climate and soil, produce the same articles, and as their respective inhabitants will feel the same wants, they will have little inducement to carry on commerce with one another, because none of the parties by doing so will obtain anything that is not to be found at home. Hence the grand advantages which we are at first view ready to believe that British America will eventually derive from her lakes, are in a great degree chimerical, and are such as could alone be realised were her chain of water-communication to run north and south instead of

east and west; for it would then extend across regions differing in soil and climate, and the productions of Upper Canada might be transported direct into the Floridas, and exchanged for those of tropical countries.

I have already alluded to the opinion entertained by some theorists, that the vast collections of fresh water which exist upon the surface of North America, conjoined with other circumstances, prove that that continent has recently emerged from the ocean; and it has further been asserted, that the process of evaporation will gradually reduce the level of the lakes, and finally dry them up altogether. There is a general impression amongst the inhabitants of Upper Canada, that Lakes Ontario and Erie subside between one and two inches every year; and the state of their banks distinctly indicate that the height of their waters was at one period considerably greater than it is at present. The other lakes, doubtless, exhibit similar phenomena; but, being far removed from civilized observation, nothing has been recorded upon the subject.

The above conclusions derive plausibility from an important fact in the topography of the State of New York, which was first pointed out by De Witt Clinton, though to illustrate a question unconnected with the present one. A ridge of

land, averaging forty feet in height, runs along the shores of Lake Ontario nearly eighty miles, and preserves a distance of from eight to ten miles from the edge of the lake, towards which the intervening ground descends with a regular and moderate slope. This tract of land, as well as the inner declivity of the ridge, abounds with incontestible marks of the agency of water; and De Witt Clinton concludes from thence that Lake Ontario must formerly have extended as far as the bottom of the latter, but that its outlet having been in some way enlarged, an immense mass of its waters had run off, and reduced it to its present level. Might we not, in admitting that the superficies of Lake Ontario has greatly diminished, attribute this exclusively to the gradual evaporation of its waters, instead of supposing that these had been suddenly displaced by an event which we have no grounds to believe ever took place.?

The lakes of British America are less agreeable objects of contemplation than her forests, inferior as these are in perfection and beauty to what may be observed in the same continent farther to the south. The entire extent of North America, from the Isthmus of Darien to the arctic circle, is absolutely covered with timber of natural growth, except in places where that has been

cleared away by the hand of man; for those open and grassy plains called prairies, which occur in the Illinois and the Indiana territories, large as some of them may appear in one sense, are in another no more than specks upon the prodigious country where they exist, and scarcely deserve to be cited as an exception to the general character of its surface.

Perhaps it is the natural state of all regions to be covered with forests, till these are destroyed by the progress of agriculture and other causes; for in whatever quarter we may dig a certain depth into the soil, whether in Europe, in Asia, or in Africa, we find fossil or carbonized timber in greater or less quantities; and while wandering amidst the busiest scenes of civilized life in the Old World, or in its most cultivated spots or in its wildest deserts, we may carry back our imagination to the time when all such places were covered with woods as lofty and luxuriant as those which in the present day overspread the most sequestered parts of North America.

The traveller from Europe, on first entering the forests of North America, feels something akin to disappointment. Filled with ideas of the primeval character and of the immense age of the trees which compose them, he finds them to be far less impressive in respect to appearance

and magnitude than he had anticipated; and he observes around him few specimens of vegetable antiquity, and a great proportion of saplings and of half-grown timber, while even the tallest and most mature trees give out no boughs within fifty or sixty feet of the ground, and present, even towards their tops, only some scanty tufts of foliage. He can scarcely believe that he stands in the midst of forests that have existed during countless ages; nor does he become satisfied of this till he turns up the soil, and discovers that it consists, to the depth of several feet, of layers of decayed leaves, the deposit of innumerable successive autumns.

But it is not in the centre of extensive forests, either in America or in any other part of the world, that the largest trees are to be found, but in places where there is a free circulation of air, and where their roots can spread without impediment. The adansonia, the grandest of all vegetable forms, attains its utmost magnitude only upon the edge of the Senegal river. The oak is seldom of any great size, except in pleasure-grounds and similar open situations; and even the pine, which better endures a confined locality than most other trees, seldom acquires much thickness of stem, though it may

become very lofty, when growing in the middle of a forest.

The forests of North America, then, consisting of trees which, generally speaking, are not of extraordinary magnitude, which seldom display much luxuriance of foliage during summer, and which in winter have none at all; to what source shall we attribute those impressions of grandeur and sublimity which they seldom fail to produce in the mind of the individual who may traverse them?

It is their stern simplicity of character, the similarity of aspect which they everywhere exhibit, and their vast and uninterrupted extent, that invest them with a kind of sentiment, if I may use the expression, which does not in the least degree belong to those masses of vegetation which cover many of the equatorial parts of the globe. The forests of Brazil and of the Eastern Islands, and the jungles of Southern India, abound with trees that produce brilliant flowers and evolve perfumes, while parasitical plants of various colours clothe their stems, and lianas twine amongst their branches like a vegetating network, or cover the ground under the form of creepers. But a scene of this kind, however extensive it may be, and however much it may delight the eye, never affects the imagina-

tion in the way that an American forest does, because its dazzling colours and sudden contrasts destroy all sense of unity in our minds, while its thickets retard our progress, and confine the range of vision within a small space. On the other hand, we wander without obstruction through the American woods; we look into their recesses, we see the stems of the trees standing distinctly apart, we feel the wind sweeping past us, and on looking over-head we here and there discern the sky, and thus enjoy shade without gloom, and seclusion without confinement.

I have had occasion to remark at the beginning of this section, that a singular uniformity of physical aspect belongs to British America; and I may here add, that its productions, at least as far as they are known, partake of the same character. We find these, whether mineral or vegetable, to resemble what are met with in corresponding latitudes over all the northern hemisphere; nor is there one that is strictly peculiar to the country, or strictly local in its constitution and origin, or such as can be pointed out as forming the distinctive feature of the region in which it occurs. No trees or plants of peculiar aspect or qualities; no mines of the precious metals; no remarkable natural phenomena; no perplexing geological appearances; and, in short, no objects calculated

strongly to awaken human interest, or to excite human cupidity, present themselves upon the vast expanse of British North America, which, destitute of any riches except such as alone are inestimable —a happy climate and a fertile soil—is not likely soon to receive from the Old World a large or a civilized population, or to be a subject of contest between the rival powers of Europe.

ABORIGINES OF BRITISH AMERICA.

How was America peopled? This question forced itself upon every inquiring mind shortly after the discovery of that country had been announced to the European world, and it has formed an exhaustless source of research and discussion there ever since. I need scarcely remark, that up to the present day nothing conclusive has been established upon the subject, and that human speculation and inquiry were never in any instance more idly employed than in the attempts which have been made to clear away the obscurity that involves it. And yet some secret influence often leads the human spirit to attach itself to questions of this nature, and to take delight in pursuing them, even under the conviction that all will be labour in vain. Is it because an employment of the kind enables us to withdraw our attention from the history and general condition of our species, and to direct it to events and circum-

stances which do not present us with any spectacles of human misfortune and misery? It would have been well for the peace of the world and the happiness of mankind, had those theologians, those visionary enthusiasts, and those political speculators, whose theories have in so many instances disturbed the general tranquillity, confined themselves to questions of such harmless tendency as the one that is now before us; for what we might in this way have lost in knowledge, we should have gained in contentment and in social harmony.

Lafitau, the Jesuit, in his learned treatise upon the manners of the inhabitants of the New World, endeavours to prove that America was peopled by a tribe of Scythian Greeks, who in emigrating there carried with them their native mythology, which our author insists is still to be traced, though under a corrupted form, in the religious systems of the Hurons and Algonquins, and other Indian nations. Adair, an English writer, considers the aborigines of North America to be the descendants of the lost ten tribes of Israel, who, according to him, contrived to pass from the Old World to the New; and he pretends that the Jewish ritual is discernible in all their ceremonials and observances. Ranking, on the other hand, tries to prove that America was first colonized by a body of Chinese, who had been sent in a fleet to invade

Japan, but who, being forced from its coasts by a violent tempest, were driven across the Pacific Ocean, and at length reached the shores of Peru, and effected a landing there, along with a number of elephants which were in their ships, and which had been intended to assist them in their hostile expedition. According to several other writers, the first inhabitants of America were a body of Welsh, whom a discontented prince of their own race conducted there by the route which the English afterwards pursued when they discovered Virginia. But a comparison of the languages of the Old World with those of the New having shown that only one of all the former, the Biscayan, bears any resemblance in structure to any of the latter, the distinction of being the populators of America has been conferred by some theorists upon the natives of Biscay, an obscure maritime province of Spain. None of these opinions have been supported by almost any one except the individuals who have respectively advanced them; and the only view of the subject that has been generally adopted is that which supposes America to have been peopled by the Mongols or Tartars of Eastern Asia, who it is thought may have reached the New World by way of the Aleutian Islands, which extend in a contiguous chain two-thirds of the distance be-

tween the two continents. It is not my intention to enter into the merits of this, or of any of the other theories that have arisen out of the grand question now before us; my present object being merely to trace a picture of human life as it exists amongst the aborigines of North America.

In taking a general view of the state of the aboriginal population of that country, the first thing that strikes our attention is the regular diminution which it has undergone since European settlements began to be formed there. Though North America, even at the period of its discovery, was more thinly inhabited in proportion to its extent than any other region in the world, not excepting Siberia, South Africa, or New Holland, it nevertheless contained many millions of human beings; and these actually formed the largest amount of population that it was capable of supporting; for all the Indians living north of the parallel of latitude 40° north subsisted exclusively by the chase; and hence every tribe required a tract of country several hundred miles in circumference for that supply of its wants which it would have found within the compass of so many acres had it reared domestic animals and cultivated the soil. The existence of such a state of things has been too commonly supposed to explain satisfactorily of itself the causes

of that rapid destruction of the Indian nations which has gone on from the time that foreigners began to appropriate to themselves their territories for the purpose of colonization and agriculture. It is true, that the native tribes near the coast, being dispossessed of their hunting-grounds, found it necessary to retire into the interior of the country in search of other lands; in so doing they encroached upon the territories of their neighbours; these sought to repel them; bloody wars ensued; many lives were sacrificed; and whatever party proved the conquerors, the result was the same. If the aggressors succeeded in establishing themselves in the region which they had invaded, the people displaced by them had to seek an abode elsewhere, and this they could not obtain without driving from thence its actual occupants, in the same way as they themselves had been driven from their possessions; if, on the other hand, the aggressors were repelled, they necessarily repeated their former attempts elsewhere, and continued to do this till they succeeded in establishing themselves in suitable hunting-grounds. In this way the occupation of any line of country in North America by Europeans sufficed to diffuse warfare over the whole continent, by depriving a number of Indian tribes of their lands, and forcing them

to seek others in regions which were already appropriated, and where there was no room for additional inhabitants; nor did this evil occur only once, for it was repeated in a more or less destructive way as often as the foreign invaders of North America extended their settlements, whether by force, or by artifice, or by purchase; and though its violent results might be confined to one place, these produced impulses and undulations which agitated and disturbed the entire mass of Indian society even as far as the confines of the Pacific Ocean.

But, in reality, the disorders arising from the occupation by foreigners of a part of the North American hunting-grounds were for a long time too slow in their progress, and too inconsiderable in their effects, to occasion that rapid and extensive destruction of the aborigines which immediately succeeded the first colonization of the country. The portions of territory which were occupied and cultivated by the settlers in New England, in New York, in Virginia, and in Georgia, for at least a century after the emigration of Europeans to these quarters had begun, were so insignificant, that the loss of them could have occasioned no inconvenience whatever to their previous owners; and we must ascribe the early decrease of the

Indian population to other and more powerful causes, viz. the abuse of spirituous liquors, and the ravages of the small-pox.

All the nations of Northern Europe and Asia acquired a more or less decided taste for spirituous liquors soon after they had been accustomed to them, and some of them are in the habit of drinking to excess as often as they have the means of doing so; but in no part of the Old World shall we find the love of intoxicating fluids carried to such an extravagant and unaccountable height as amongst the Indians of North America. Nor was this propensity of slow growth and gradual developement, as might have been expected in the case of a people who had been entirely unacquainted with the use of internal stimulants of any kind previous to the arrival of Europeans in their territories. On the contrary, their first experience of the effects of ardent spirits excited an ungovernable passion for these, which quickly diffused itself even amongst their women, and caused both sexes to become actors in scenes of outrage and brutality which neither of them had before conceived to be compatible with human nature. In vain did the chiefs and the old men expostulate with their respective tribes, and represent to them the miserable consequences

that would result from the prevailing habits of intoxication ; the fatal propensity proved in most instances too violent to be overcome, and the naturally intelligent, honourable, and generous-minded Indian, hurried away by its seductions, squandered his property, neglected his family, ruined his constitution, and forfeited all his good qualities. Those public meetings of the tribes, which had formerly been scenes of savage eloquence and calm deliberation, were now disgraced by intemperance, and generally ended in some sanguinary affray, which perhaps afterwards led to hostilities between two entire nations, while to the destruction of life that occurred in the field of battle was added that which took place in private and at home ; for the Indian, unfitted for the chase by habits of intoxication, could no longer procure subsistence or clothing for himself or his family, and sooner or later perished with them in his lonely wigwam in the forest.

The natural temperament of the North American Indian is doubtless the cause of his infatuated attachment to spirituous liquors. Sombre and melancholic, obliged to be much alone during his hunting excursions, seldom experiencing any strong emotions except while engaged in war, and finding little pleasure in the society of women, he is happy to be able to animate by external

stimulants the languor of a contemplative state of existence. The fatigues which he undergoes in the chase tend to increase this propensity, and the more so because by indulging in it he obtains, for a time at least, that sense of bodily vigour and energy which always constitutes one of his greatest sources of satisfaction. We may suppose too that the sudden acquisition of a new species of enjoyment led the Indian to abuse it in a way that he would not have done had he had some previous experience of it; for I think we shall find that those people who were unacquainted with the use of spirituous liquors of any kind until these were introduced amongst them by Europeans, have invariably been more addicted to habitual intoxication than tribes or nations who had always practised the art of making exhilarants of one sort or another. An infusion of the cacoa-bean in water was the only manufactured liquor that the inhabitants of the city of Mexico drank at the period of the Spanish invasion and for long afterwards; but no sooner were they instructed how to obtain *pulque* (a fermented juice) from the agava-tree, than they suddenly became nearly as much addicted to intoxication as the North American Indians are in the present day. The Hottentots of South Africa used no inebriating liquors previous to their having inter-

course with Europeans, but they shortly afterwards acquired the strongest relish for them; and their excesses in this respect have of late years contributed in no small degree to hasten the extinction of their race. And the North American Indians, once equally temperate in their national habits, are, as we have just seen, now reduced to a few insignificant wandering communities by a similar desolating passion for spirituous liquors.

The small-pox was introduced amongst the North American Indians shortly after European emigrants had begun to flock to their country; and if its ravages were more local and less unremitting than those produced by the abuse of spirituous liquors, they exceeded the latter in fearfulness and rapidity. The Indians were struck with dread on the first appearance of the disease, and their horror of it increased when they found that it was contagious. To prevent its diffusion, they used to shut up the affected person in a hut in a retired situation, and, placing within his reach a supply of water and food, abandoned him to his fate. But notwithstanding this precaution, the small-pox was extensively fatal amongst the Indians; and those few who happened to recover from it were viewed with disgust and aversion by their fellow-countrymen, on account of the disfi-

guration of visage which it occasioned. Adair relates that several instances had come within his knowledge, in which persons bearing strong marks of the virulence of the disease had, on seeing their faces in a mirror, been so shocked and appalled by the change of aspect which they had undergone, that they shortly committed suicide.

Thus, though European tyranny and massacre have had comparatively little to do in the destruction of the aborigines of North America, two equally powerful agents have supplied their place and imitated their effects, and are still in more or less active operation in those parts of the continent where materials remain for them to work upon. All the great Indian nations of former times are now entirely extinct, or are recognizable only in a few wandering communities who bear their respective names, though they in reality have no pretensions to these, and consist merely of the remnants of a variety of once distinct and independent tribes drawn into fellowship by weakness and misery. The Canadas, Georgia, Virginia, Pennsylvania, and the borders of Lakes Ontario and Erie, were formerly the grand seats of Indian population, but all these countries are now overspread with European farms and villages, and entirely destitute of aboriginal inhabitants; nor do we find any tribes of the kind existing in a

natural and independent state till we approach the eastern side of the Rocky Mountains, a distance of at least two thousand miles from the shores of the Atlantic.

The Indians having been almost entirely extirpated in the more fertile parts of the continent, or driven from thence by the encroachments of Europeans, we might suppose that the few who still exist would find an asylum and a tranquil place of abode in the vast territory which lies between Upper Canada and the coasts of the North Pacific Ocean. But so far is this from being the case, that the native population in that quarter, inconsiderable as it is, has for many years past been exposed to the same causes of decrease which I have just described as having operated so fatally elsewhere. The profits of the fur trade long ago induced a mercantile company to send agents to carry it on in the central parts of British America, and no community of Indians, however remote its place of abode may be, has escaped the intrusion of these men, who make it their business wherever they go to introduce and encourage amongst the natives of the country a taste for ardent spirits and for articles of European manufacture. These are offered in exchange for furs of different kinds, and the Indians, stupified by the effects of the first, and fascinated by the

gaudiness of the last, fall an easy prey to the arts of the traders, and becoming slaves to new and pernicious wants, they devote themselves unremittingly to the chase in order to obtain the means of supplying these; but instead of hunting deer and buffaloes, and such game as would afford abundance of food to themselves and their families, they go in pursuit of those animals only which yield marketable furs. These are (as may be supposed) both scarce and shy; but the Indian, should he fail in procuring some of them, must renounce the pleasures of finery and intoxication, and he accordingly perseveres in the chase as long as his physical powers will admit; and having at length procured a few peltries, he hurries to the nearest factory and barters them for rum or brandy, and perhaps drinks till he dies upon the spot, or until his exhausted constitution becomes paralyzed; while his wife and children, unprovided with food and destitute of protection and assistance, wander in the forest and eventually perish from want. The neighbourhood of all the trading posts in the interior of North-west America is frequented by Indians who have destroyed their constitutions by intemperance, and who, unable to bear the fatigues of the chase, prowl around like gaunt and starved wolves in search of any description of food that may fall in their

way. Their moral character, long before they are reduced to this state, suffers various degrees of deterioration ; and the bold, sincere, hospitable and high-minded inhabitant of the forest becomes at length a timid, fawning, deceitful being, in every way subservient to those traders who have caused his ruin, and whom he had in his uncorrupted state been accustomed to despise and to regard as naturally his inferiors.

Such are the consequences of introducing a taste for European manufactures amongst an uncivilized people ; nor does the above picture apply to North America only, for it represents what takes place in various other parts of the globe, and is no more than one out of innumerable instances that might be brought forward to show how much misery is entailed upon men of simple habits by the extension of commerce into the regions in which they live. But it does not become the mercantile nations of Europe to trouble themselves with considerations of this kind ; and the utilitarian doctrine that by increasing the wants of any people we cannot fail to increase their happiness, is one which is now generally received, and which is perfectly in accordance with the commercial and calculating spirit of the present age. The great encouragement which the English have always given to the establishment

of missionaries abroad, does not arise altogether from a feeling of piety, or from any impression that these men will effect much moral good in the countries where they settle; but the opinion is that they will sooner or later introduce amongst their inhabitants a taste for articles of European manufacture, and thereby increase the commerce and prosperity of Great Britain; and we shall discover that it is this style of thinking, though under a disguised form, that leads many persons to desire the civilization of Africa, and to form associations and plans for effecting that object.

Of all parts of the history of the human species, the most repulsive and incensing are those which relate to that intercourse between civilized and savage communities which began upon the discovery of America, and which has been carried on in various quarters, and from various motives, ever since. In perusing details of the mutual aggressions of European powers — of their sanguinary battles — of broken faith between sovereigns — of persecutions for matters of opinion, and of political disturbances and civil discord — however much we may have reason to bewail the fate of those thousands of virtuous, peaceful, and unoffending members of society that have perished or have been ruined in the course of such calamitous affairs, we can in general console

ourselves with the reflection that the authors of them have seldom altogether escaped the miseries which their desperate proceedings may have brought upon others; and we sometimes enjoy the satisfaction of seeing them fall victims to their own insolence, bigotry, or ambition. But retribution of this kind is scarcely ever observed to occur in transactions between civilized men and savages, however unjustly and iniquitously the former may conduct themselves — all the pain, and spoliation, and insult, and disadvantage being invariably on the side of the latter; while the triumph, the superiority, the plunder, and the profit are the portion of the first. Could I find a single instance in which any visit, either casual or prolonged, made by Europeans to barbarous communities, has produced the smallest benefit to the latter, I would willingly renounce the above opinion. On these occasions the introductory scene has almost without exception proved one of hostility and bloodshed, owing to the insolence and haughtiness of the European parties; for we observe in the history of nautical discovery, that the persons engaged in it have always considered themselves entitled, when landing upon any unknown coast, to slaughter such of its inhabitants as might venture to oppose them, never conceiving it possible that savages

should wish to defend their native land, and their homes and families, or at least entertaining an opinion that they have no right to do so. It would be difficult to mention one navigator, except Anson and La Perouse, who has not, in the course of his voyages of discovery, put to death many individuals without just cause; and it is curious to remark how in some men a natural ferocity of character, which may have long lain dormant, is evolved and disclosed when an opportunity of indulging it occurs. But the command of a splendid and well-armed ship, or of a strong body of troops, and the power of conducting and employing these in any direction, are circumstances calculated to elate an indifferently-regulated mind into an insolent sense of superiority, and to lead it to meditate and execute excesses which it would in a different station have avoided and condemned; and this appears to me to form the best and most plausible excuse that we can offer for that wanton destruction of human life with which the explorers of the globe, whether by sea or by land, may justly be reproached. And even in those few instances in which an amicable intercourse has taken place between Europeans and savages from the period of their first meeting, we shall find that the former, though they may have partaken for

weeks together of the shelter of some friendly harbour upon a barbarous coast, and of the refreshments which it might afford, have generally, when on the eve of departure, invented some pretext for quarrelling with their entertainers, in order that they might enjoy an opportunity of displaying the power of their fire-arms and the manageableness of their ships.

But, even admitting that the small-pox and the abuse of spirituous liquors have had a greater share in the depopulation of America than I have ascribed to them, we cannot but feel astonished that the Indians should have made such feeble and such ineffectual resistance to those Europeans who first began to occupy their lands. Carolina, Virginia, New England, New York, and Lower Canada, were settled by inconsiderable bands of adventurers, whom their aborigines might easily have dispossessed and expelled, though they were at that time unprovided with fire-arms, and unskilled in the principles of civilized warfare; for the comparative inefficiency of their weapons was fully compensated by their intimate local knowledge of their respective territories, and by their roving habits of life, and their expertness in managing ambuscades.

The pacific demeanour of the first colonists,

and the artful manner in which they insinuated themselves into the confidence of the Indians, no doubt restrained the latter from molesting them, even after they had begun to suspect that they would eventually prove troublesome and dangerous neighbours.

Never did Europeans obtain possession of the territories of any uncivilized people with so great a show of equity and moderation as was displayed by them in their transactions with the aborigines of North America; no tract of land having in a single instance been appropriated by the settlers before it had been obtained either by gift, or grant, or purchase, from the tribe to which it belonged. The Indians, charmed by the apparent justice of such a mode of proceeding, and as yet unaware of the utter worthlessness of some of the articles which they were accustomed to receive in payment of their concessions, and of the evil properties of others, continued this system of barter for a long time, unsuspicious of what its results would be, but secretly hoping that the influx of Europeans would shortly cease, and that the latter would then seek no farther increase of territory for their occupation and subsistence. And when the Indians at length perceived that the continual and systematic encroachments of foreigners were

producing fatal consequences to themselves, the colonization of North America had proceeded so far, that the expulsion of the settlers became a thing which they possessed neither courage to attempt nor strength to accomplish.

It is true, indeed, that about the middle of the last century, several chiefs and warriors proposed to form a confederation of all the great aboriginal tribes of North America, for the purpose of attacking the European settlements there, and either massacring their inhabitants or forcing them to quit the country; but that political jealousy, which seldom fails under similar circumstances to occasion disunion in civilized states, operated in an equal degree here, and no plan of the kind was ever organized, or at least reduced to an efficient form. The Indian chiefs, unaccustomed to subordination or submission, were each ambitious of holding the supreme command of the confederacy; and their pride proving more stubborn than their patriotism, they always remained at variance upon this point, and wasted in disputes and in rivalry that time which ought to have been employed in the destruction of their general enemy. It is certain that, had the principal nations of the eastern parts of North America combined against the white men at even so late a period as that above mentioned,

they would have recovered most of their territories, and driven the intruders to the very borders of the ocean. But the private wars and dissensions of the aborigines of North America proved as favourable to the security of the earlier European establishments there, as the system of castes existing in Hindostan has always been to the continuance of British dominion in that country; and we shall find in the history of all uncivilized regions, and of many civilized ones, that party spirit, whatever form it may have assumed, has proved a more powerful instrument of subjugation in the hands of a foreign enemy than successful war and mighty fleets and armies.

Having made these remarks upon the present general condition of the aborigines of North America, I will now proceed to take a summary view of their character, manners, and mode of life. But, in doing this, it will be necessary that I should in a great measure confine myself to the Indians of British America; for, though all the native tribes inhabiting that continent to the northward of Mexico bear a strong resemblance to each other in their moral and social condition, still varieties of climate and soil have, as may be supposed, occasioned many very distinguishable local differences in these respects. The Indians of Georgia, of Carolina, and of the neighbouring

territories, are of all others the mildest in their manners, and the most civilized in their habits of life; for they reside at least part of the year in villages, and derive most of their subsistence from the cultivation of the soil, pursuing the chase chiefly as a recreation, and as a means of procuring furs for barter, and also an occasional supply of animal food. Such are the Muskogulge, the Okmulge, and the Arkansa nations, all of whom enjoy a gaiety of temperament, a tenderness of disposition, and a love of sociality, which gradually become less conspicuous amongst the tribes as we advance to the more northerly parts of the continent, where the sharpness of the climate, and the physical character of the country, prove unfavourable to their developement. After passing the parallel of latitude 40°, we shall not find any Indians practising agriculture, while, at the same time, we shall observe a marked deterioration in the aboriginal character, both moral and intellectual; and also that austerity of manners, and that reserve and taciturnity, which in all countries result from a life of hardship and privation. The northern tribes likewise exhibit much greater irritability of temper and more sanguinary dispositions than the southern ones, and they feel little regard or respect for the female sex, and hold social qualities and pleasures in small estima-

tion. The inhabitants of the two regions also differ considerably in personal appearance and in the shade of their complexions, the southern Indians being fairer and more athletic and better shaped than the northern ones, who, on the other hand, surpass them in the power of enduring fatigue and hunger, in bravery and contempt of pain, and in expertness in the chase.

Confining myself henceforth exclusively to the aborigines of British America, I will here remark that those Europeans who first had intercourse with them, were particularly struck with the goodness of their understanding, the nicety of their perceptions, their love of truth, and their sincere and honourable style of conduct. They found them to be savages in nothing but in their mode of life, and observed that they cultivated many virtues that had become nearly obsolete amongst the inhabitants of the Old World; and that, though they lived in absolute independence of all authority and of each other, their natural rectitude of intention did more to restrain them from the commission of crimes and injuries than the best administered laws ever do in civilized society. Nor was this an exaggerated view of the matter, for none of the barbarous nations with which we were acquainted at the time that Cabot and Cartier and others visited Lower Canada,

were comparable in intelligence and moral qualities to the aborigines of that country, though several of them might surpass the latter in knowledge of the arts of life. The wandering hordes of Northern Asia and Europe, whether Tartars or Laplanders, the Moors of the deserts of Barbary, and the Negro tribes of West Africa, respectively possess many good qualities, but they are deficient in individual stamp and vigour of character, and are, as it were, unaccustomed to think or act except in a mass or under a simultaneous impulse; while, on the contrary, almost every Indian, to whatever tribe he may belong, maintains a personal distinctness in the society of which he forms a member, and refuses to be confounded with the multitude. The first Europeans who became acquainted with the aborigines of British America were not less struck with their habits of individual independence, than with the peculiar turn of their national genius. An expertness in warfare, the arts of eloquence, a devotedness to the service of their country, and the power of enduring pain with firmness and composure, were found to be the qualities in which they chiefly desired to excel; while they proved, by the regular and consistent tenor of their conduct, that they knew little or nothing of that frivolity and capriciousness of disposition with which most uncivilized

nations may justly be reproached, and which too often render them altogether contemptible. The fatigues and privations to which the Indian is continually exposed must be highly unfavourable to the developement of his faculties; and, if he nevertheless displays a large share of intellect and judgment, we may easily conceive how much he would excel in these qualities, were his attention less exclusively engrossed by his physical wants, and by the labour of supplying them.

In taking a view of the general mode of life of the aborigines of British America, we find its most prominent feature to be the chase, which is here pursued in a style that we observe in no other part of the world. The hunting nations of Europe, Asia, and Africa, employ themselves in that way during a greater or less proportion of the year only, and then retire to their villages or settlements to enjoy the produce of their labours, and continue there till the former is expended, or until the proper season arrives for resuming the latter. But the Indian seeks no interval of repose of this kind, nor has he any fixed place of abode, or any desire to possess such. He roams through the forest from the beginning to the end of the year, carrying with him no articles but what are necessary for the chase, and seldom sleeps in the

same spot two nights in succession; for, even though an abundance of game may tempt him to prolong his stay in a particular neighbourhood, he will in general construct a new wigwam or hut every evening, instead of making use of the one which had sheltered him the preceding day. Of all individuals in the world, except those of his own race, he is the least fettered and encumbered with ideas of locality and association; and his attachment to his native regions, strongly as it sometimes developes itself, is altogether a general sentiment, which allows him to feel equally happy and equally at home in whatever part of them he may chance to be. Day after day he traverses the forests, either alone or attended by his wife, or by a few companions, impelled by no object except the pursuit of game; and indifferent whether this may conduct him to the east or to the west, or to the north or to the south, aware that, wherever he may go, the trees will supply him with bark for a wigwam, and with fuel to warm him and to dress his food. Nor would he in general hesitate in the course of his excursions to pass the boundaries of the country belonging to his tribe, and to roam across the entire continent of America, were he not restrained in this respect, either by a sense of the injustice of encroaching

upon the hunting-grounds of a neighbouring nation, or by the fear of being taken prisoner or killed by some enemy.

The most remarkable peculiarity of character produced by this state of feeling and this mode of life, is a desire for change of abode and for continual locomotion. The British American Indian is at all times more or less influenced and impelled by a sentiment of the kind; and though we must admit that the necessity of hunting causes him to wander from place to place, he has an uncontrollable desire to do so independent of this, and can scarcely be tempted by any means whatever to remain long in one spot. The love of a nomade life is perhaps the strongest affection of which the uninstructed human mind is susceptible; and in examining the history of the various attempts that have been made to reclaim savage nations from their peculiar predilections, we shall find that the one in question has generally proved unconquerable, or nearly so, and that it has in many instances led them to sacrifice and abandon all the advantages and acquisitions which may have accrued to them from a temporary renunciation of their barbarous habits. The enjoyment of absolute liberty and independence, no doubt, constitutes the principal charm of a wandering life; but as these are by no means incompatible with á

fixed residence, there must be some other influence, whether negative or the reverse, that attaches men to the former; and I think we shall find this to lie in the physical character of those countries which nomade communities chiefly inhabit. The forests of North America, the steppes of Tartary, the sandy plains of Arabia, and the deserts of South Africa, are respectively remarkable for a dull uniformity of surface, and a monotonous repetition of the same aspects of nature; nor in any of these regions is the eye or the imagination ever delighted by agreeable combinations of scenery, such as occur in fertile and cultivated districts, and make the beholder linger in their neighbourhood, and even feel a desire to take up his abode in the midst of them. Here we have a source of local attachment which is utterly unknown to the American Indian, the Arab, the Tartar, or the Hottentot, who individually finding no greater external agreeableness in one place than in another, feel indifferent as to where they wander, so long as they can conveniently obtain the means of subsistence.

But, independent of these considerations, a nomade life presents many attractions even to civilized men, most of whom renounce it with regret after having had some experience of its pleasures. None of its forms prove so agreeable

to an European as that which it assumes in the wilds of North America; and there are many instances of white men having renounced their homes and country, and deliberately adopted the Indian mode of life, from a conviction that it is preferable to any other. They, doubtless, were seduced into that way of thinking, as much by a strong attachment to field sports, as by a love of independence, personal and pecuniary, and a dislike to every kind of social restraint. And there are perhaps few individuals of intelligence and reflection who have not occasionally, in the course of their existence, viewed with uneasiness and regret the fetters which a conformity to the habits of civilized society has imposed upon them, and felt a secret wish to be relieved from these, and to be permitted to enjoy life under a more simple and natural form. We may conclude that most men, whether belonging to a high or a low sphere, would feel a similar inclination were they carefully to examine the tenour of their past existence, to balance the good and evil which it has embodied, and to weigh in opposite scales its pleasures and its pains. Finding in all likelihood that the latter have had the preponderance—that they have suffered innumerable disappointments in their views and objects of ambition—that they have been in the daily habit of sacrificing convenience

and freedom to external appearance—and that after all their troubles, irritations, and anxieties, they have actually acquired nothing that is really worth possessing, they would turn with delight to the contemplation of a nomade style of life, and regret that their fastidious tastes and complicated habits rendered them incapable of adopting it, or at least of relishing its simple scenes and unartificial enjoyments. Humboldt has remarked, that the taste for hunting which exists in many parts of civilized Europe, is indicative of that partiality for savage life that sometimes developes itself in individuals who know nothing of it from personal experience. And in accordance with this idea we may observe, that a considerable proportion of the inhabitants of our large cities, whether of the middle or lower ranks, have a passion for the solitude of the country, and find a most agreeable and congenial recreation in wandering without an object in sequestered places, and in withdrawing themselves for a time from the tumult, the punctiliousness, and the restraint of active social life.

But it ought to be stated that the nomade life of the British American Indian, attractive as it may appear in some respects, involves frequent scenes of privation and misery, though these in general result rather from the improvidence of

the individual concerned than from the peculiar nature of his physical condition. The wandering hunter too often abuses the liberality of fortune, and wastes or even leaves behind him a considerable part of the produce of a successful chase, instead of preserving it for seasons of want. Accustomed to trust to his own dexterity and perseverance for a supply of food, he seldom has at command more of this than is sufficient for the passing day; and should game be scarce or shy, he is reduced to the extremes of famine, and even sometimes becomes a cannibal. In the north-west parts of America, the deer and buffaloes move to the southward about the end of autumn, and most of the Indians in the former quarter begin at that season to lead a fatiguing and precarious life, owing to the disappearance of the larger kinds of game. When, as usually happens, they travel in parties or with their families, should any individual fall sick on the way, or be unable from any accident to keep pace with his companions, he is abandoned by them and left to his fate; not from inhumanity, but because they cannot carry him along with them, and because, if they remained beside him, they would all be liable to perish of hunger. Hearne, in his journey to the Coppermine river, witnessed an incident of this kind. An Indian woman, belonging

to his travelling party and labouring under consumption, found herself unable to walk; her countrymen wrapped her up in furs and laid her in the pathway, and, placing within her reach a small supply of water and food, pursued their journey with lamentations. She contrived, however, to rejoin the band before many days had elapsed; but her strength failing a second time, she was again left behind, and was afterwards no more seen or heard of. But these gloomy scenes of Indian life occur only in the more northerly parts of America, where game is at all times comparatively scarce, and where every individual who cannot provide for his own subsistence, or at least follow those who possess the means of doing this, is considered a burden to society and to himself, and as one to whom existence has ceased to be desirable.

Most of the Indians in British America are neglected when they grow old, and perhaps perish miserably from want of food and attendance; an odious and revolting feature of society, but one which derives its existence, not from a deficiency of filial affection on the part of the children and relatives concerned, but from the physical character of the country where it occurs, and the nature and constitution of human society there. And though the neglect and desertion of the aged

and infirm be an evil which appertains to nomade life in barren regions only, the principle which leads to its being adopted there is nevertheless recognizable amongst wandering communities elsewhere, though these may possess in abundance everything requisite for subsistence; for we shall find that nomade nations in all parts of the world set too high a value upon physical strength and acuteness of the senses, and are apt to regard the individual who has lost these qualities, or who has been born without them, as an useless and even burthensome member of society, though in talents and in virtue he may excel most of his countrymen. It is only when nomade life assumes a pastoral form, as amongst the Tartars and the Arabs, that old and infirm persons meet with due kindness and consideration, because mere manual strength and dexterity are less requisite and estimable in a community which occupies itself with the care of flocks, than in one which derives its means of subsistence exclusively from the chase. Herodotus informs us that the Massagetæ, a race of predatory Scythians, were accustomed to put to death their parents and relatives when age or disease had rendered them incapable of providing for themselves; and several tribes of North American Indians have been accused, not without reason, of tolerating a similar kind of depravity.

A view of the fatigues, privations, and scenes of distress which the British North American Indian is liable to encounter in the course of his wanderings, will not lead us to expect much agreeableness in the character and tenour of his domestic life. Here he is, sombre, melancholic, and sometimes even morose; and, though much attached to his family, he feels little pleasure in their society, at least in so far as mere conversation is concerned. At all times taciturn and reserved, except when exhilarated by spirituous liquors, or excited to speak at a public meeting of his tribe, he is nevertheless a stranger to apathy of mind, and loves to exercise his thoughts either in retracing the past, or in forming schemes for the future; which last occupation may be said to constitute one of his chief internal resources, for owing to his habitual improvidence he generally requires to arrange and contrive every day how he shall supply the wants of the morrow. This continual uncertainty with respect to his future means of subsistence, exerts a most unfavourable influence upon his disposition and intellectual faculties, and is the source of everything that is repulsive in the one or defective in the other. Hence the coldness of temperament with which he has been reproached; hence his want of tenderness for the female sex; and hence his indifference to the or-

namental arts of life. But, on the other hand, the physical evils of his condition favour the developement of those virtues in which he is seldom deficient, and which, in his estimation, are alone worthy to be cultivated, viz. — determined courage, patience under suffering, expertness in war and in hunting, and a devoted attachment to personal freedom and independence.

The British American Indian has no domestic amusements to enliven his idle hours, because these last are so few in number that they never oppress him with languor or ennui; while the chase, though it be the essential business of his life, affords him, even in the midst of its fatigues, an exciting and varied source of diversion. Neither does he cultivate or possess that manual dexterity which would enable him to improve his habitation and to form for his own use articles of convenience or decoration; for this quality would be of little avail to an individual who is continually changing his place of abode, and whose property requires to be of the most simple and moveable description. The Indian is equally destitute of a taste for music and poetry; a drum is the only instrument of the former kind with which he is acquainted; and his songs, all of which are produced extempore, refer exclusively to war, and consist of a disjointed series of sanguinary expressions. But in eloquence

he excels all other uncivilized nations, for in his speeches he argues as well as declaims; and his figures and allegories, though he often introduces both in too great abundance, possess a vigour and an appropriateness which render them impressive and agreeable even to those whose associations are entirely foreign to the wilds of North America and to the state of aboriginal society there.

The religion of the British American Indians is very simple in its nature, comprehending fewer tenets, and a more meagre and unimaginative system of mythology, than we might have expected to find in such a quarter. A belief in one God, called the Great Spirit, is its leading doctrine; but most tribes admit the existence of a great number of inferior deities, who govern the elements and regulate the fortunes of men; and it is usual for every Indian to select one of these as his guardian angel, and to propitiate it by prayers and offerings. In the more barren and northerly parts of the continent, where food is scarce and the climate severe, and where a nomade life is attended with unceasing fatigues and privations, many tribes incline to Manicheism; and while they acknowledge the existence of the Great Spirit, they assert that an evil being holds immediate dominion over the earth, and takes delight in producing pain and sorrow amongst its inhabitants. The women are

particularly disposed to adopt this doctrine, because in these regions all the more laborious and degrading parts of the business of life devolve upon them; and they even occasionally kill their female children as soon as they are born, in order, as they say, to save them from the miseries which a prolonged existence would infallibly entail upon them. The Indians universally believe that there are places of future reward and punishment; and, though they but ill agree in regard to where these are situated, they have but one opinion upon the nature of the enjoyments and sufferings which they respectively hold in store for their inmates. Paradise is, according to them, a beautiful country, abounding with game, and tenanted by their deceased friends and relatives; while hell involves pain, hunger, cold, and negation. Here we perceive a repetition of those gross conceits respecting the celestial and infernal regions which characterise the mythologies of all northern nations, not even excepting that of the Scandinavians. In them, an exemption from labour, and the gratification of the appetites, are always represented as constituting the chief rewards of the blessed; while, on the other hand, the religious systems of more southerly regions, where the human race live in comparative ease and abundance, in general give a more re-

fined and intellectual character to the enjoyments of heaven.

It appears singular that, amongst a people so imaginative and intellectual as the British American Indians are, religion should appear under a form as mean and unimpressive as she ever assumes in even the least civilized parts of the earth. The Indians have neither priests nor places of public worship, unless we should give the former name to those pretended sorcerers who delude their countrymen into the belief that they have occasional periods of inspiration, during which they can predict future events, and obtain a knowledge of what is going on in the upper and lower worlds. Persons of this kind are found in every tribe, and they meet with more or less credit and encouragement according as their prophecies have been verified or otherwise. They perform their incantations in a temporary hut or tent, composed of wooden poles covered with skins, and heated with the vapour produced by pouring water upon hot stones; and no one is allowed to enter the enclosure, or to observe their proceedings, the result of these being communicated or kept secret as happens to suit the views of the actors. We may recognize in these men a counterpart of the angekoks of the Greenlanders, the conjurers

of Nova Zembla, the magicians of Congo and Loango, and the prophets of the Caribbean and Antilian islands; and the existence of this class of impostors has always been observed, except in the case of the British American Indians, to argue a very small developement of the faculties in the nations by whom they are esteemed or even tolerated. But if we feel astonished that the Indians should allow themselves to be duped by the clumsy artifices of their priests, we must be much more so at the credulity of the early European voyagers and travellers, most of whom not only gave faith to the supernatural powers assumed by the magicians of uncivilized countries, but even attributed these to the direct agency of the devil. Martin Frobisher describes the sorceries of the Greenlanders, and expresses his satisfaction that both himself and his followers had escaped their malignant influence. Martyr, in his Decades of the Ocean, often alludes to the diabolical arts and enchantments practised by the inhabitants of the West Indian Islands; and he asserts that a friar, named Peter de Corduba, once exorcised and conjured the evil spirits of Hispaniola, and forced them to answer many questions. Carlo and Merolla, two Catholic missionaries who attempted to propagate the

faith in Congo and Angola, had continual contests with the sorcerers of these countries, whom they describe as possessing supernatural powers of an evil kind; and Lafitau declares himself of opinion that the magicians and conjurers of North America keep up a communication with infernal spirits. It is highly improbable that any of the nations to which I have referred ever possessed sorcerers superior in expertness and in the arts of deception to those who in the present day are found in North America; and we may therefore regard the credulity of its aborigines in this respect as much more excusable than that which was so generally manifested in similar cases by Europeans less than one hundred and fifty years ago.

The existence of regularly constituted priests is always favourable to the developement of the mythological system of the people amongst whom they are found, the secular members of a barbarous community having in general neither leisure nor capacity to enter into religious speculations, or to define and determine which ought to be believed by themselves and their countrymen. Hence the British American Indians, the Negroes of West Africa, and the Hottentots, are remarkable for the meagreness of their respective mythologies; nor are they better provided

in a different department of human knowledge, which equally falls within the sphere of the priesthood, and which in uncivilized countries at least always owes its origin to them — I mean national history. The mode in which America was peopled having from our earliest acquaintance with that country formed a perplexing subject of discussion, it was hoped that many of its aboriginal tribes would have been able to communicate some traditions relative to the question; and the northern part of the continent was considered the quarter in which these were most likely to exist, because it is generally agreed that the tide of human migration in the New World flowed from thence. But the British American Indians possess no traditions of this kind that merit serious notice, and mostly believe that the human race originated in the regions which they themselves respectively inhabit. Nor are they less defective in monuments of art and antiquity than in records of the past. It would be unreasonable to look for buildings and works of labour and magnitude in a country occupied by a few inconsiderable nomade tribes; but as the Indians are acquainted with the use of a rude kind of hieroglyphics, and occasionally employ these to express particular occurrences, we might expect to find that they had preserved amongst themselves

some specimens of that description of writing, of greater or less antiquity, and embodying the general annals of their nation or tribe. But no remains have been discovered in this department any more than in the other. Those tumuli—those vast mound-like fortifications — and those copper axes and fragments of pottery, which have been discovered in North America, and which have led many persons to conclude that a civilized people must eight or nine hundred years ago have inhabited several parts of it, are entirely confined to the United States, or at least have hitherto been observed only to the southward of Lakes Ontario and Erie. The Indians of British America could therefore have had no hand in the formation of them, and on that account it would be out of place to enter into any details concerning them here.

Various attempts have been made by Europeans to reclaim the Indians from their wandering habits of life, and to render them a sedentary and an agricultural people. It has long been obvious that unless something of the kind is effected, the extinction of the entire aboriginal race of North America must eventually ensue, from the appropriation and settlement of their hunting-grounds which has already taken place, and which is still going on in the present day. The

Indians themselves are sufficiently aware of this, but the subject causes them little uneasiness; for being naturally improvident and disinclined for anticipation, they think only of the passing day, or consider that at worst some part of their territories will always remain available to them as long or much longer than they themselves can possibly live. Like most other uncivilized men, they never reflect upon what may be the condition or fate of their posterity; nor is any inhabitant of the earth less called upon to do this than an Indian; for having received absolutely nothing from his ancestors except existence, he possesses and enjoys nothing that he is bound in justice and conscience to preserve and to hold in deposit for the use of future generations.

It is extremely difficult to induce even a nomade pastoral people to renounce their wanderings, and to cultivate the soil; but it is infinitely more so to effect a similar change in a nomade hunting nation, such as the British American Indians, the transition from the one state to the other being less violent, and less subversive of former habits of life, in the first case than in the last. Hence the total inefficiency of all the plans that have hitherto been devised for the civilization of the Indians, whether the principle of these was general instruction conveyed through

the medium of schools, or conversion to Christianity, or the diffusion of a taste for the arts, enjoyments, and conveniences of social life. But another difficulty stands in the way of the accomplishment of this object, which at least equals in magnitude the one just mentioned. The Indians, unlike the generality of savage nations, refuse to admit that Europeans are superior to themselves, or that our manners, institutions, and modes of life are preferable to their own, or in any way deserving of imitation; and their dulness of apprehension or obstinacy in this respect is so confirmed, that even the fire-arms of our manufacture, which they are in the daily habit of employing in the chase, and which infinitely surpass in utility their native weapons, are not regarded by them as proofs of our knowledge and acquirements, or as an example of the value of those arts in which they themselves are so miserably deficient. They conceive that it is avarice and cupidity alone that induce us to exercise our faculties in adding to the conveniences of life, and that if we had not the means of selling the products of our ingenuity abroad, we would be content to do without them at home, and would adopt the habits of the Indian, as being those that are most congenial to human nature and human happiness. These gross and mistaken

opinions are the more deeply rooted in their minds, because they flatter one of their prejudices, which of itself presents a strong barrier to their advancement to a state of civilization. A condition demanding any regular manual labour is, according to their ideas, the most degrading one in which a man can be placed; and aware that industry is essential to the pursuit of agriculture, and to the existence of social and organized communities, they regard civilization as necessarily a state of toil and servitude, which they ought studiously to avoid as long as they desire to preserve their dignity and their independence. No other aboriginal people that has been brought into contact with Europeans, either by conquest or in any other way, has so long and so obstinately refused to conform to the habits and usages of the latter as the North American Indians have done, excepting only the Hindoos, who, possessing laws, institutions, forms of government, and systems of literature and philosophy of their own, are provided with the strongest and most uncontrovertible reasons for adhering to these and resisting innovations. But the wild, wandering, half-naked Indian, attached to his peculiar mode of life by aboriginal habits alone, would, we might suppose, be willing enough to receive from foreign hands the means of amelio-

rating his condition; he has, on the contrary, always rejected these—nor is he likely to accept them so long as he can find an unappropriated tract of forest for refuge between the east and west shores of the continent which he inhabits.

EUROPEAN SOCIETY IN BRITISH AMERICA.

The history of the early settlement of the different countries of America which lie north of the Gulf of Florida, is tame, uninteresting, and deficient in variety, compared with that of the more southerly parts of the same continent. It is true, that the first embraces fewer scenes of bloodshed, rapine, injustice, and misery than the latter, and that it shows us the European invaders of the New World devoting themselves to the pacific and gentle occupations of agriculture, instead of ransacking the earth and the waters for gold, and committing in the pursuit of wealth those excesses which had previously been regarded as the peculiar province of ambition and bigotry; and in so far it is the more agreeable of the two: but none of its episodes make the smallest approach in grandeur or singularity to the conquest of Mexico by Cortes, or to that of Peru by Pizarro; nor do even the

most daring of them present such examples of valour and perseverance as the invasion of Florida by Fernando de Soto, and the subjugation of Chili by Valdivia. But the different character of the transactions which attended the settlement of the northern and southern divisions of America, had its origin as much in the dissimilar state of aboriginal society in these two quarters of the globe, as in the opposite views, habits, and circumstances of the Europeans who respectively resorted to them. The Spaniards, rendered a martial and adventurous people by their protracted contests with the Moors, carried that spirit along with them to the New World, and there delighting nearly as much in scenes of danger and enterprise as they did in the acquisition of gold, they attached themselves by preference to expeditions which involved these, and carried on the business of life as it were sword in hand; and coming into contact with civilized nations in Mexico and Peru, and with warlike ones in Florida and in Chili, they found a field for the display of their intrepidity such as had no existence in the northern parts of America.

The British who formed settlements in Virginia, and in New England, and in the Carolinas, were a quiet and sedate people, either intent upon commerce and agriculture, or in search of a place

of refuge from religious persecution; nor, had any theatre of conquest or glory presented itself to their view, is it probable that they would have been tempted to seek distinction there. This may be said in particular with reference to the Puritans; for never was any system of opinions more calculated than theirs to repress that spirit of enterprise and adventure which leads men to roam abroad in quest of scenes of excitement, and to seek an outlet for their energies, both mental and physical, in situations of danger, uneasiness, and perplexity. Puritanism, with all its externals of humility, embodied so much self-approbation, and so much self-importance, that men under its influence necessarily became absorbed in the affairs of their sect, and in a manner indifferent to everything that did not fall within the range of the circle of thought which its doctrines prescribed and defined; and though the restraint which this implied might sometimes prove disagreeable or inconvenient, the party submitting to it was encouraged to do so by the idea that he was one of that chosen few who alone possessed the faculty of discriminating between right and wrong, and to whom it behoved the rest of mankind to look for example and instruction. And it was this system of ex-

clusiveness, objectionable as it is in many points of view, that rendered the Puritans the most useful, industrious, and successful settlers that ever took up their abode in North America.

On arriving there, they quietly and unanimously engaged in the essential business of life — that of cultivating the soil and forming themselves into an organized community; and though their progress towards both of these objects was at various times retarded by religious dissensions, they never altogether lost sight of either of them, nor expended their means and energies in useless and unprofitable pursuits. Had not the Puritans been animated and held in fellowship by a strong spirit of sectarianism, and by a desire for mutual conformity amongst themselves, they would in all likelihood have followed the example of the generality of the emigrants who preceded them, and devoted their time to expeditions of discovery, to schemes of conquest, to a search after the precious metals, and to wild and unproductive adventures of various kinds. The early annals of our North American settlements might, in that case, have resembled in interest and variety those of the Spanish nation in the same continent; but, happily for its aborigines, the Puritans were always so much engrossed with their own internal

and local affairs as to be inaccessible to a passion for conquest, or plunder, or extensive dominion.

The history of the progress of European settlement in British America involves few remarkable circumstances. The emigration to the Canadas was small and irregular while they remained under the dominion of France, and the settlements were chiefly confined to the banks of the St. Lawrence, or to their immediate neighbourhood; nor did they extend much higher up that river than the present site of Montreal. The French were sufficiently aware that a milder climate and a more fertile soil were to be found farther westward, but they wished to concentrate the scanty population of the country as much as possible in the vicinity of Quebec, both for the defence of the capital and for the encouragement of fisheries and agriculture along the borders of the St. Lawrence. And at this time the regions lying around lakes Ontario and Erie were not accessible to the colonists, because the Six Nations of Indians held possession of them, and would allow no European settlements to be formed in any of their territories, which were immensely extensive, and embraced the finest districts of Upper Canada.

The Count de Frontenac having at length,

partly by intrigue and partly by force, subdued the Six Nations, or at least, diminished their pretensions, a large portion of their lands would most likely have been thrown open for settlement, but the war that ensued with the English, and the eventual cession of the Canadas to that nation, prevented any measure of the kind from being carried into effect at the time; and when the country fell into our hands, all its most favoured and fertile parts remained overspread with forests, and almost unknown, except to the Indians who pursued the chase there.

The French peasantry who at present inhabit Lower Canada, a good deal resemble in manner and character those of the maritime provinces of France; they are a frugal, industrious, and contented race of people, pure in their morals and benevolent in their dispositions, and strongly attached to their native religion. But those who reside upon the lower parts of the St. Lawrence, possess little of that vivacity of temper and that habitual cheerfulness which belong to the French people generally; for, living in a rigorous climate, and in a sterile and gloomy country, and accustomed to hard labour and a poor diet, their minds necessarily partake of the character of their personal circumstances. On the other hand, the French Canadians set-

tled in the neighbourhood of Montreal, are, perhaps, the most agreeable specimens of the lower classes of society that are to be found in any part of the world. Intelligent, animated, free from rusticity, and of unconquerable good-humour, they exemplify the happy influence which moderate labour, abundance of the necessaries of life, and a limited degree of knowledge, exert upon the human character. But these men, or indeed any of the other French residents of British America, are too inconsiderable in number, and too insignificant as respects their influence upon the mass of society there, to deserve any prolonged attention; for all the populous parts of that country are mostly occupied by individuals who, unlike them, retain few or none of the characteristics of their respective natal regions, and who, unfettered by associations either foreign or domestic, exist in a state of unpruned wildness similar to that of the forests which surround them.

In taking a general view of the British colonies in various parts of the world, we cannot but be astonished at the prolific power which the parent country has displayed in affording inhabitants to so many regions, without either exhausting or impoverishing herself; but it appears to me that her success in this respect is less

to be attributed to her redundant population at home than to the means which she has always enjoyed of promoting a systematic kind of emigration, and of affording to every class of her subjects a suitable and congenial sphere of action in foreign countries. No colony whatever, though it may be in the highest degree favoured by art and by Nature, can form an equally desirable place of resort to men of all grades and professions; for when these are brought into contact and collision in a spot where society has not assumed a well-organized character, and where the rights, interests, and duties of particular individuals remain undefined, a scene of social confusion necessarily ensues, and every one, instead of applying to his proper business, engages in local dissensions, and seeks to promote the advantage and to increase the importance of the class to which he happens to belong, though his efforts in these respects may in reality be hurtful both to himself and to others. In a situation of this kind, the merchant, the agriculturist, the manufacturer, and the ship-owner, necessarily take opposite views of the affairs of the colony, and individually try to divert these into the channel that is likely to prove most conducive to the prosperity of their respective professions; and thus, by their intrigues and devices,

throw obstacles in the way of the general improvement of things, and counteract each other even in their mutual efforts to do good.

Such evils seldom prevail, at least to any extent, in the foreign settlements of the British nation, because almost every one of these has a peculiar social character which fits it for the residence of a certain class of her subjects only; and it is this circumstance that has in a great measure enabled her to maintain in subjection and prosperity the numerous and extensive colonies that at present belong to her.

The higher classes of her subjects who desire to obtain employment abroad find a congenial sphere of action in the East Indies, from which all adventurers are excluded, and where all the European residents harmonize in their views and interests, and willingly conform to the established system of things; on the other hand, capitalists and men of enterprise inclined for foreign speculations resort to the West Indies, or to the *seaports* of our Eastern dominions; the labouring agriculturist, unable to subsist in his native land, has a suitable place of refuge in British America; and the convict, whose presence might irritate the feelings and poison the comfort of colonists of a fastidious class, is transported to New South Wales, where he lives out of the way

of those who wish to shun his presence and the country which he is permitted to inhabit. This individuality of character in our foreign establishments has contributed to their prosperity in a double way; it has not only promoted emigration by enabling people disposed for it to perceive at once what part of the world is most suited to their views and dispositions, but by assimilating the general interests of the inhabitants of each colony, it has rendered the local government of them a comparatively easy task, and given a solidity to the social system in situations where, under different circumstances, it very commonly remains in a state of incurable disjunction.

But while we admire the arrangement of the colonial establishments of Great Britain, we cannot fail to perceive that their very convenience and effectiveness as respects emigration, has produced in the parent country an artificial state of society which involves many evils and disadvantages.

The source of that impulse which in England leads a large proportion of the lower classes of the people to endeavour to raise themselves above their natural and proper sphere, and to encroach upon that of the higher orders, is our numerous and extensive colonies; for the regular outlet

which they have long afforded to men of the learned professions, has encouraged mechanics and tradesmen and others to educate their children for these, though under different circumstances they never would have entertained an idea of the kind. There are few individuals, however humble their rank in society may be, who, if they possess the requisite means, do not endeavour to qualify at least one of their family for a situation in the colonies, and should they fail in obtaining this, they send him there in the character of an adventurer, instead of making him follow either his father's occupation or some analogous one at home. His parents, in order to meet the expenses of his education, are obliged to deny themselves the necessaries of life, and to be unjust to their other children by withholding from them those enjoyments and advantages which would have fallen to their share, had not one individual out of their number been selected for elevation to a sphere much higher than that in which they themselves are destined to move. Nor does the evil stop here, for the family having fitted out one of its members for the colonies, and procured a situation for him there, next seeks to raise itself to the grade which he may have attained in society abroad, and with this view perhaps even relinquishes its humble though

profitable occupations, and sacrifices everything to the vanity of external appearance. Ruin sooner or later follows this change of habits, and six or seven individuals may thus be reduced to poverty and rendered miserable, on account of one whom the vanity of his parents has sent abroad to run the chance of making his fortune, but who, disappointed in his views, probably has cause to regret the care and expense that have been lavished upon him, and to wish that he had been permitted to follow some humble and illiterate occupation in his native country.

Had Great Britain no colonies, or at least none that afforded a sphere of action for men of the learned professions, or for enterprising adventurers, we should find the lower, and even the middle classes of her population, bringing up their children as mechanics and tradesmen, instead of struggling to elevate them to a grade in society, which they could never attain in a country destitute of outlets for its surplus inhabitants, of every rank and description. Were England to be suddenly deprived of her foreign establishments, it would at once appear evident that the entire mass of her population, exclusive of the aristocracy and the landed proprietors, had advanced at least one step beyond their proper and natural sphere of life; for the members of the

learned professions and various other educated persons, who had found employment abroad, being thus thrown back upon their native country, and those individuals of the same description, who were qualifying themselves at home to follow a similar career, being from the like cause deprived of an opportunity of emigrating, the country would be overwhelmed with legal, clerical, mercantile, and medical pretendants; and the grand proportion of these, unable to live by their professions, would be obliged to retrograde one or two steps in the scale of society, and to become mechanics and manufacturers, or even to acquire the means of subsistence by manual labour. It is true that most of them, in doing so, would only resume that condition, and return to that sphere in which they had been born, and to which they properly belonged; but this reflection would hardly reconcile them to their lot, or render them contented and useful members of society, and their native country would long feel the evils of their presence, and the troublesome effects of that progressing impulse, which extensive and prosperous colonial establishments had communicated to the middle and lower orders of her population. The influx of wealth and knowledge which England derives from her foreign relations and connexions, is not unac-

companied with ill effects to society at large, in so far as it diffuses there a restlessness of spirit, a passion for wealth, and a rivalry in external appearance, which, though favourable to the progress of manners, are subversive of happiness, of simplicity of mind, and of quiet contentment. In the inland countries of Europe, where the national and individual resources are circumscribed and defined, and where the mass of the people can neither improve their circumstances by going abroad, nor derive any revenue from foreign establishments, we find them living in a state of social harmony and placid enjoyment that are scarcely known in England. They do not generally seek to advance themselves into a sphere superior to that in which they were born, nor do they endeavour to appear richer than they really are, or sacrifice their ease and domestic tranquillity for the sake of external appearance. In Germany, in France, in Austria, and in Sweden, poverty is seldom considered disgraceful, and the inhabitants of these countries take but moderate pains to acquire wealth, and are not led to devote much attention to that object, because few ways of compassing it present themselves to their view. But in Great Britain, the foreign channels through which riches flow are innumerable, and are open to all ranks, and consequently her in-

habitants, instead of tranquilly living upon the means which they may respectively possess, employ their thoughts, their time, their talents, and their energies, in contriving how they can best increase these, and render them subservient to their personal ambition.

I have just remarked, that each of the principal British settlements has its peculiar and distinctive character, and this holds as true with respect to British America as to any of the others, for it presents us with the simplest and most stable form of a colony that can well be imagined. The emigrant who goes there has necessarily nothing in view but to dêrive a subsistence or a competency from the cultivation of the soil, the staple productions of which so much resemble those of his native country, that any knowledge of agriculture which he may have acquired at home proves efficient and available in his new situation, to which he quickly becomes reconciled, because it does not subject him to the wearisome task of seeking and accumulating local information, in order that he may qualify himself to manage his own affairs. Residing in the interior of a vast country, and far removed from cities and sea-ports, and from the bustle of human society, his thoughts are never drawn beyond the limits of his farm, and he has no temptation to form schemes for en-

riching himself, and no means of engaging in speculations of that kind, either foreign or domestic; for his lands, producing no rare transportable commodities, nor in short anything that is particularly in demand abroad, he perceives that he must remain contented with the simple necessaries and moderate comforts of life, and with that slow but regular increase of these, which a reasonable degree of industry will infallibly procure to him. And he likewise perceives, that no efforts of his own can ever enable him to acquire the means of eventually returning to his native country and residing there, and he accordingly dismisses all thoughts of the kind, and as it were naturalizes himself to the spot upon which he lives, and chooses it as his portion for better or for worse.

In regions like British America, the foundations of colonial stability and aggrandizement lie in the poverty of the settlers, and in the necessity, which their circumstances create, that they should permanently remain in the country after having once taken up their abode there; for a rich but uncertain and fluctuating population is less conducive to the prosperity of a new settlement, than an indigent but sedentary and laborious one. We are sure that we shall never lose sight of the latter, and we can calculate how much they will effect within any given length of time; while the former, though

they may commence their career in a vigorous and enterprising way, too often stop short in the middle of it, or, failing in their inordinate and ill-conducted speculations, abandon the settlement, and deter others from coming to supply their place. The colonial establishments that have been formed by different nations in the rich and productive regions between the tropics, though they offer a far more enticing field of exertion than those situated in temperate regions can ever do, have undergone vicissitudes and disasters to which the latter have always been strangers. The West Indies, the Eastern Islands, and the equatorial parts of America, have for centuries past been the resort of persons of wealth and enterprise; but nevertheless, we find that the agricultural and commercial settlements in these regions have never had much stability, and that their population has always been liable to change and to fluctuation, circumstances equally arising from a want of industry and perseverance in their foreign inhabitants, and from the facility with which many of them have acquired sufficient wealth to admit of their returning to their native country, and spending the rest of their lives there.

When we contemplate the general condition of the peasantry of Great Britain, and observe to what privations many of them are exposed from

want of employment, and from the high price of food, we would wish to form a colony for the reception of all of them that might choose to emigrate, and where they might receive fertile lands free of cost, and expend their labour upon these, and become independent of everything except their individual industry. The nature of the locality of the spot selected for a settlement of this kind would be a subject of great importance. It ought to possess a soil and a climate resembling as nearly as possible those of Great Britain, in order that the emigrants might be able to cultivate the productions of their native land, and to live as respects diet, dress, exercise, and habitations, in the way that they had been accustomed to do there. It ought to be so far distant from any seaport, that its inhabitants could have no opportunity of acquiring a taste for commerce, or even any notions upon the subject; nor ought a town or populous settlement to lie in its neighbourhood, lest these should be the means of introducing amongst them the corruptions of busy social life, or of rendering them dissatisfied with the simplicity of agricultural habits and manners. The colony ought moreover to be provided with churches and with clergymen, but with this indispensable restriction, that all of the latter should belong to the same sect and preach the same doctrines; nor would

it be complete without a reasonable number of schools, in which the simplest branches of education were alone permitted to be taught; and lastly, it ought to enjoy the protection and fostering care of a mild, a liberal, and an equitable government, such as would neither oppress it with taxes, nor interfere too much with its local and internal arrangements. A population composed of the peasantry of England assembled in a situation of this kind, would, we may believe, exhibit one of the most agreeable and satisfactory states of unrefined social life that can easily be imagined; for relieved from the pressure of poverty, certain of the means of future subsistence, and performing only a moderate and wholesome proportion of labour, they would become a contented, gentle, cheerful, and unassuming race, exempt from prejudice, destitute of marked peculiarities, and in short, the reverse of everything that is coarse, repulsive, or unnatural.

But how and where shall we found a colony such as I have just described? The truth is, that one of the kind already exists in the interior of British America, and I have drawn an outline of the circumstances of Upper Canada, merely to show that men, placed in a situation of the kind, do not acquire that style of character which we should be led to expect. The inhabitants of

British America, so far from exhibiting that simplicity of mind, and that similarity of ideas, and those mild manners, which seem to be a general concomitant of agricultural life in remote and solitary situations, and in a fertile country, are extremely artificial in their habits and opinions, and seem unwilling to allow these to flow in the channel which they would naturally follow were they permitted to take their own course. Those characteristics of rural life, that rusticity of mind, those unassuming manners, that placid contentment, and that serenity of domestic feeling, which belong more or less to the agricultural population of England, are scarcely ever to be observed amongst even the British settlers of British America. There the rude dwelling, embowered in forests, and remote from any other habitation, is seldom found to contain the humble and unaffected inmates who seem congenial to such an abode. On the contrary, we shall hardly fail to find amongst them high pretensions, an assuming style of manners, and a vain display of general knowledge. They usually recall with pain and unwillingness their former condition in their native country, and deride all local associations connected with the latter; and strive to show, that they have emancipated themselves from the trammels of national habits

of thought, and are now qualified of themselves to judge, to reason, to approve and to condemn, in all possible transactions of life, without foreign assistance. All this is, perhaps, merely the result of a strong sense of personal independence in minds that have formerly known nothing of the kind; nor is it unlikely that when it has subsided, a variety of more agreeable and more consistent qualities will develope themselves. But meanwhile, we find little difficulty in viewing these anomalous features of character with toleration, because they are accompanied with good and benevolent dispositions, and because we may expect, that the descendants of the present agricultural population of British America will exhibit a temperament more congenial to their condition, and in better harmony with their circumstances and mode of life, than what I have just described; though it is impossible not to be struck with the nature of the results, which have in this case arisen out of a condition of human society, which would seem calculated to produce very different ones.

The great mass of the population of British America consists of persons of the lower classes, who have emigrated from Europe, or of their descendants. A society of this kind does not exhibit those shades of character, that diversity

of manners, and those grades of refinement, which afford scope for description, and therefore the notices which I have to offer respecting it, are necessarily unimportant and few in number. The agricultural inhabitants of British America are, generally speaking, an uneducated and illiterate people, but they are, nevertheless, remarkable for plain good sense, for soundness of judgment in the common affairs of life, and for a large share of acuteness and discernment. They are, moreover, hospitable, good-humoured, and sociably inclined, but have little vivacity of disposition, and their manners are somewhat abrupt, boisterous, and unconciliating. They pay little regard to external appearance, whether as respects themselves personally, or their families, or their habitations; nor do they cultivate or esteem any kind of amusements, or even engage in those to which they have been accustomed in their native land. Their chief pleasure consists in conversation, and when they carry this on with a stranger, they exhibit a good deal of that impertinent curiosity with which the Americans have so often been reproached. The subjects upon which they talk amongst themselves, are in general rather beyond the range of their powers of mind or opportunities of observation, being chiefly politics and religious controversy, and here, and in almost everything else

that they do, they make incessant efforts to appear superior to what they really are; but this kind of vanity is not without useful results, for it causes them to be more scrupulous in their conduct and transactions than they would perhaps otherwise be. They are universally of active and industrious habits, and even after they have acquired a competency, they seldom grow indolent or cease to engage in the common business of their farms. The chief faults in their general character are self-conceit, an affectation of knowledge which they do not possess, and a perpetual desire to show that they feel independent. It is obvious that these qualities must form great barriers to their improvement, and in reality they have no idea that anything of the kind is either requisite or desirable in their own case; nor are they perhaps much to blame in this, for it is not easy to perceive what particular good would result from their cultivating their minds, and refining their manners, except in so far as it would render them more agreeable to the strangers and foreigners who occasionally come into contact with them.

It must however be admitted, that the present manners and habits of thought of the agricultural population of most parts of British America, are compatible only with that system of social equality which exists there, and which does not require or

allow of any general division of its inhabitants into higher and lower classes; but were an influx of emigrants of wealth and education to take place from Europe into the Canadas, and were they to purchase large tracts of land in the middle of populous settlements and to reside there, they would find it necessary, either to lower their pretensions to the standard of their neighbours, or to incur their hostility and hatred, and continue in perpetual dissension with them; for nothing could reconcile the latter to the introduction of an aristocratic branch of the community into the country in which they live, and they would obstinately refuse to accord its members either homage or respect, alike from their natural aversion to everything that implies a state of individual prerogative, and from a fear, lest their own rights and liberties should eventually be restrained and encroached upon by their self-styled superiors. But a collision of this kind is not likely soon to occur, for no person acquainted with the character and habits of the agricultural population of British America would be inclined to purchase an estate there, and to reside at least permanently upon it, because he could not fail to perceive that a situation of the kind would involve many unpleasant circumstances, and also because he could employ his capital to greater advantage elsewhere. The Canadas are at present a suitable place of resort

for poor men only, and it is to be hoped that they will long continue so; for when they become anything else, their utility to Great Britain, and their value as a colony will greatly diminish. The humble and industrious emigrant now finds there a congenial asylum, and an open and unrestricted field of exertion, but were rich individuals to purchase and appropriate to themselves the best districts in the country, and to encumber these with servitudes, quit-rents, superiorships, mortgages, entails, and similar territorial complications, that uniformity and simplicity of the social system which at present exists in the colony, and which operates so much to the general benefit of the mass of its inhabitants, would be destroyed, and the distribution of landed property would become as partial, inconvenient, and fantastic as it is in the most civilized parts of Europe. We often hear a particular class of people in the Canadas complain that the British government has never favoured their trade to the degree that it might do, by raising the duties upon foreign timber, and by encouraging the exportation of flour from the colony. Whatever truth there may be in these statements, the result of the system that has been adopted towards the Canadas by the parent country, is exactly what every disinterested person must desire; for they have not been allowed to become

a great commercial country, and they have for that reason preserved up to the present time their utility and desirableness as a place of emigration for the agricultural poor of England, which is the colonial character that ought alone and exclusively to belong to them.

Though the great mass of the population of British America is, as I have already said, composed of persons of the lower class of society, still a few individuals belonging to a superior one are to be found in various parts of the country. These are chiefly merchants and their families, either natives of the colony, or Europeans who may have settled there. In manners and mode of life they resemble the middle ranks of society in Great Britain, only that they have more simplicity of mind, and affect less external pretension. If the substantial parts of human happiness consist in an abundance of all the necessaries of life, in an exemption from fatiguing employments, in the absence of any anxiety respecting the future, and in the enjoyment of health, freedom, and general tranquillity, the class of individuals which I am now describing is as highly favoured as any portion of the human species. This is quite apparent in the vivacity of disposition and cheerfulness of temper which they continually exhibit,

and in their unartificial tastes and unaffected style of thinking; for people never cease to be natural till they have ceased to be happy.

In examining the general condition of the middle ranks of society as they exist in the colonies, and in the more civilized parts of Europe, and forming an estimate of the moral and physical advantages which they respectively enjoy, our opinions are kept in a state of fluctuation by a view of the tranquil happiness of the first, and of the social refinement of the latter. It is scarcely necessary to remark, that in the colonies we seldom observe that cultivation of the taste and understanding, and those accurate perceptions of things, which lend a strong charm to social life wherever they exist, and which confer sources of enjoyment upon those possessing them which are unknown to other minds. But then we are led to ask, whether all this be really worth the trouble which attends its acquisition, and the sacrifices which are in most cases required to admit of its being cultivated and displayed. Two-thirds of the middle ranks of people in Europe are induced, by their passion for refinement, to live much beyond their means; and in supporting their pretensions to that quality, they are obliged to have recourse to a variety of disagreeable, inconvenient, and even de-

grading expedients, and sometimes even to dispense in secret with the common necessaries of life. The concealment of poverty, and the judicious management of external appearances, form the chief business of many of the families and individuals who move in refined circles; and to gratify their artificial tastes and supply their artificial wants, they sacrifice their natural ones, and absolutely become despicable in their own eyes, in order that they may find favour in those of the little world to which it is their ambition to belong. Social life, under this form, presents a most attractive aspect to persons who view only its exteriors, or who can cultivate these without sacrificing too much for the sake of them; but it is to be feared that the enjoyments of those who enter into it without adequate resources, fall infinitely short of the chagrins, anxieties, and disappointments, which they must often experience in the course of their deceptive career.

On the other hand, in the colonies, social life presents a comparatively simple character, and if its details are less varied and exciting than they are in the more civilized regions of Europe, they possess a serenity and repose which have their peculiar agreeableness. This arises equally from the moderate views and unartificial tastes of the people, and from the general easiness of their circum-

stances, and the abundance in which they enjoy all the necessaries of life; and to the last advantage may, in a great measure, be attributed the harmony that is wont to prevail in their homes and domestic circles, a requisite of happiness which is often wanting amongst the middle ranks of society in Europe, where convenience and comfort being sacrificed to external display, the members of a family are subjected to privations which are calculated to sour their tempers, and to irritate them against each other. The colonist, living in a country where fashion, splendour, social rivalry, and public amusements and dissipations are unknown, is never rendered discontented by the view of scenes and pleasures, from which his poverty or his rank of life may exclude him; and the resources which lie within his reach, though these may be comparatively limited, suit the scope of his ideas, because there are none of a higher or more refined sort within his observation. Were I desired to point out where civilized society is to be found in its happiest, least deformed, and most tranquil state, I should refer the enquirer to the superior class of inhabitants of such colonies as British America, the Mauritius, and the Cape of Good Hope.

When we examine upon abstract principles all the different conditions of human society, from

that which involves the greatest barbarism, to that which exhibits the highest degree of refinement, we find it extremely difficult to determine what specific grade deserves the preference; for, if men in a barbarous state offend us by the coarseness of their ideas, and the defectiveness of their understanding and perceptions, those who have attained a mature civilization, present to our view a perpetual collision of interests, a developement of evil passions, a complication of sources of human misery, and an inequality of circumstances, which, excite repugnance and dismay, and force us to decide against the eligibleness of a state of society, which while it permits one-tenth of the population composing it, to cultivate their tastes and improve their faculties, condemns the remaining proportion to a life of labour, poverty, servitude, and embarrassment, and forces multitudes of our species to become selfish, dissembling, and even wicked in their own defence. The generality of persons, in contemplating the evils which everywhere attend a high degree of civilization, are satisfied to refer them to the innate depravity of man; but this doctrine is too inconclusive and untenable to be admitted by any but the most indolent and superficial observers. The innate depravity of our species is doubtless true in one sense of the expression,

but not as respects the question now before us; for it seems very certain that a vast proportion of the crimes, outrages, and delinquencies which occur in the world, result from the afflictions, necessities, sufferings, injustices, and hardships, to which the mass of mankind is unavoidably subjected in those peculiar states of society, where moral evil chiefly abounds. That men are not naturally malignant in their dispositions, or inclined to crime, or disposed to injure each other, is proved by a reference to those countries, whether civilized or savage, in which they enjoy a moderate share of personal freedom and independence, and an abundant supply of the necessaries of life. It is because a condition of this kind is incompatible with a high state of social refinement that I object to the latter, and that I desire to maintain that the amount of moral evil in any community, is almost entirely regulated by the nature of the physical condition of its members; and that so long as these are miserable, it is vain to expect that they will ever be virtuous.

THE END.

DEPARTMENT

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